

# **Horizon**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART**

---

## **LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN VERSE**

Selected *by* OSCAR WILLIAMS

### **THE CASE OF BILL WILLIAMS**

- (i) *by* ANNA KAVAN
- (ii) *by* MAXWELL JONES
- (iii) *by* EDWARD GLOVER

### **IDDINGS CLARK**

*by* PAUL GOODMAN

### **WORK & OPINIONS OF CECIL COLLINS**

*by* STEPHEN SPENDER

### **GÉRARD DE NERVAL**

*by* NORMAN COHN

REVIEWS *by* ANNA KAVAN *and* H. TREVOR-ROPER  
REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS *by* CECIL COLLINS

---

MONTHLY: ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE NET

FEBRUARY VOL. IX, No. 50 1944

***Edited by Cyril Connolly***



## Subscriptions

THE PUBLISHERS  
OF  
HORIZON

regret that no further  
subscriptions can be  
accepted

Readers wishing to  
have their names on  
the waiting list are  
asked to apply for  
vacancies as they occur

## Henry Miller

*By Nicholas Moore*

First full-length study of the famous  
American writer. Author of *Tropic of  
Cancer*, *Tropic of Capricorn*, *Wisdom of  
the Heart*, *Colossus of Maroussi*, etc.  
40 pages and cover

## Preludes

*a poetry anthology*

Here are collected poems by:

JOHN BAYLISS, ROBIN ATTHILL,  
MAURICE BUTTERWORTH, MAURICE  
LINDSAY, SYLVIA READ, JOHN BATE,  
BRUCE BAIN, VIC TURNER, EDWIN  
ALLAN, DEREK STANFORD

*Each Volume 1s. 1d. post free from*

## THE OPUS PRESS

WOOD HOUSE, CHOLESBURY ROAD  
WIGGINTON, TRING, HERTFORDSHIRE

## Editions Poetry London

### POEMS 1937-42

DAVID GASCOYNE

*With drawings by Graham Sutherland. Now ready. 8s. 6d. net.*

### CAIN: A PLAY IN VERSE

ANNE RIDLER

*'Anne Ridler's work stands out as always, gravely beautiful.'*

*The Times Educational Supplement.*

*4s. 6s. net.*

Poetry London

PL

Nicholson & Watson

# Fontaine

*Revue Mensuelle de la Poésie et des  
lettres françaises*

EDITOR: MAX POL-FOUCHET

No. 30

## VISAGES DE L'EUROPE

...	Les Partisans
JOSEPH KESSEL	Le champ de tir
ARTHUR KOESTLER	Le Transport Mixte
ENRICO TERRACINI	L'Incendie

ANDRÉ ROUVEYRE	Apollinaire
APOLLINAIRE	L'amour, le Dédain, l'Espérance ( <i>Inédit</i> )
G. E. CLANCIER	Domaine de l'Homme
AGNES CAPRI	Les Voleurs de Musique
PIERRE EMMANUEL	Foule à Sodome
JEAN AMROUCHE	Pour une Poésie Africaine

## CHRONIQUES

ERNST NORDLIND	Ellen Key et R.-M. Rilke
GEORGES BLIN	Le Sens de l'Absurde
HELENE BOKANOWSKI	Note sur Henri Focillon
Les Revues, etc.	

SUBSCRIPTION RATES, 30s. per year

*Ten numbers, including two double numbers*

SINGLE COPIES, 3s. each

*Double numbers, 6s. each*

FROM SOLE AGENTS FOR GREAT BRITAIN:

HORIZON

6 SELWYN HOUSE

LANSDOWNE TERRACE, W.C. 1

TE R minus 4898



---

# FABER & FABER BOOKS

---

**Sickert**

Edited by **LILLIAN BROWSE**

This first monograph devoted to Sickert's painting is a book of the utmost importance. With an essay on his life and notes on his painting by Lillian Browse, and an essay on his art by R. H. Wilenski.

*Profusely illustrated, 21s.*

**J. B. Yeats : Letters to his son and others**

Edited by **JOSEPH HONE**

These extraordinarily interesting letters begin in 1872, end with the year of Yeats' death at 84, and are written from London, Dublin and New York.

*With 16 reproductions of J. B. Yeats' work, 16s.*

**Poems Chiefly Cornish**

**A. L. ROWSE**

The second volume of poems by the author of *Poems of a Decade*.

6s.

**Roman Vergil**

**W. F. JACKSON KNIGHT**

A study of one of the greatest poets of all time which should remain the standard work for many years.

15s.

**James Joyce**

**HARRY LEVIN**

This brilliant book is the first to serve at once as an introduction to Joyce and the *whole* of his work.

7s. 6d.

**A Summary of the World Federation Plan**

**ELY CULBERTSON**

'My personal view is that Ely Culbertson's *World Federation Plan* is the most important contribution to world peace that any writer of our generation has made'.—*Lancelot Hogben*

5s.

**Journal of a Husbandman**

**RONALD DUNCAN**

The story of a young writer and poet of ability who withdrew from the world of letters to seek self-sufficiency on the land, although his inexhaustible energy enabled him to keep going a small periodical, *The Townsman*.

8s. 6d.

---

**24 RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1**

---

# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. IX No. 50 February 1944

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENT	77
A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN VERSE	<i>Selected by Oscar Williams</i> 80
THE CASE OF BILL WILLIAMS	
(i) Anna Kavan	96
(ii) Maxwell Jones	99
(iii) Edward Glover	103
IDDINGS CLARK	<i>Paul Goodman</i> 107
THE WORK AND OPINIONS OF CECIL COLLINS	<i>Stephen Spender</i> 115
GÉRARD DE NERVAL	<i>Norman Cohn</i> 119
SELECTED NOTICES:	
WATER ON THE STEPS	} <i>Anna Kavan</i> 138
THE BARRICADES	
THE COMPANY SHE KEEPS	
THE LOST TRAVELLER	
THE MACHIAVELLIANS	<i>H. R. Trevor-Roper</i> 141
REPRODUCTIONS of paintings by CECIL COLLINS appear between pages 116 and 117	

The editorial and publishing Offices of HORIZON are at 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, W.C.1.—Six months' subscription, 10/- net, including postage, U.S.A.—£2.50. Agents for U.S.A. & Canada: Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street, New York City, U.S.A. For advertising terms please write to The Business Manager, Terminus 4898

All MSS. submitted should be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope, and will not be returned if this is not enclosed

## **Hilary St. G. Saunders**

**PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!**

By the author of *The Battle of Britain*

The impressions of a journey all over America and to certain parts of Canada. Mr. Saunders' visit was brief, and his journey long and rapid, but it left in his mind a vivid and immensely encouraging picture, and his book is intended to give the reader a picture of a great people struggling with tremendous vigour and determination to create with us a new world. 8s. 6d.

### **MACMILLAN CENTENARY AWARDS**

The closing date for submitting entries for the Macmillan Centenary Awards, originally announced as December 31st, 1943, has now been postponed to

DECEMBER 31st, 1944.

Full details of these Awards may be obtained from Macmillan & Co., Ltd., St. Martin's St., London, W.C.2

## **Edith Sitwell**

**PLANET AND GLOW-WORM**

A book of Dreams and Slumbers

This is not a book about Dreams; it is meant for those whose 'continual cares, fears, sorrows, dry brains' drive rest away; it contains some of the composing calming beauties that, in the compiler's own experience, bring a happy sleep in their train.

February. 6s.

**MACMILLAN & COMPANY LTD.**



## COMMENT

A SOLEMN thought. This is HORIZON's fiftieth number. We are all more than four years older than when, in good time for Christmas 1939, the first number appeared. Those young then are now not so young, those not so young are now middle-aged, the middle-aged are more elderly, and some of our original readers and contributors are dead. When peace is signed how welcome would a royal proclamation be which announced that the civil age of every British subject should be their age on 3 September 1939, on the day our country declared war! We have taken an hour off the day and we once took a day out of the year in this arbitrary fashion, what more delightful (and economical) present could our countrymen now receive than the right to blot out five years of war and so to be legally rejuvenated? If by a stroke of the pen all England were made five years younger then it will soon look five years younger.

What have we lost or gained intellectually by five years of war? We have gained in seriousness, but lost in mental elasticity; the emotional strain of war has broken our curiosity, has fatigued us to the point at which we are cynical, impervious, distressed or hostile in the presence of new ideas. After four years of HORIZON, one gets a very clear idea of what our reading public prefer. But it is necessary to give them sometimes what they do not like. Now we know that the HORIZON public are intelligent, appreciative, and discriminating—but they are also mentally lazy, somewhat escapist, and far too 'literary'.

Now in a world in which such great though confused changes are taking place as at the present, a purely literary magazine, though it would have a genuine value as a preservative, would not reflect the state of contemporary thought, and HORIZON has always attempted, while keeping art and literature as the main topics, to frame them in a political and sociological setting. But those articles which have been non-literary in approach have been apt to bore, baffle, or enrage our readers. Which articles have provoked the most violent reaction? Not literary articles of extreme pessimism such as Osbert Sitwell's 'Letter to My Son', or E. M. Forster's 'New Disorder'—these have been enthusiastically welcomed—but articles like Archimedes' 'Freedom of Necessity', Jim Phelan's 'Naughty Mans' and Friedmann's

'Kierkegaard'. Archimedes was anti-æsthetic, anti-individualist, atheistic and materialist in feeling, but immensely optimistic. 'Seumas Boy' outraged familiar prejudices about the true nature of children. The article on Kierkegaard gave offence by applying psycho-analysis to religion. It would not be true to say that these writers were right and our readers wrong to object to them, for the matters they raise are still arguable in either direction, but it would be true to say that our readers, so open-minded on literary questions, even when they involve morals, ethics, and national prejudice, react with instinctive violence and even vested jealousy against scientific statements, especially when they conflict either with religion or with the beliefs current in individual humanism. Archimedes, 'Seumas Boy' and Mr. Friedmann are the Bogeymen of HORIZON, whose effect on our average reader is like that of the art of the late Mr. Alfred Wallis on Evelyn Waugh. It would be easy to accuse our readers of lack of self-knowledge, but it would be more true to say that the fault lies in our English education, which has so separated art and science that the devotees of these two great and growing modern religions cannot understand or appreciate each other. We must blame both those scientists who do not see anything valid in the claims of the imagination, and those artists who are blind to all that is æsthetic in the process of science.

Meanwhile, at the risk of alienating our readers still further, HORIZON will continue to try to bring them together. Thus if we were to take stock of this, our fiftieth number, we would say these two things about it. First, that most of the writers in it are very little known. The American poets are quite unfamiliar to us; so are the authors of the short story and of the main literary article, and if a magazine can reach its fiftieth number and fill it up with little-known writers who attain, and even rise superior to the standard of others, then that magazine is absolutely healthy and has nothing to worry about.

Secondly, we would point out that our propaganda to our unfortunate readers has now become so subtle that a number like this can be read in two ways. Thus for a purely literary reader we provide a general article on the fate of the individual in the machine, a new American short story with a literary flavour and a long essay on Gérard de Nerval, which contrasts the French romantic poet with the classical eighteenth-century prose writer



(Diderot) of the number before. He should therefore be satisfied. But for the scientific humanist there is different fare. The general article, the 'Case of Bill Williams' raises the most acute problem of the relations of science to the State. To what extent is the State allowed to dictate to science the conception of Normality which Medical Science (in this case Psychiatry) should strive to propagate? In time of war we permit the State to adjust us to an abnormal society. Are there too many Bill Williams? Have we let the State go too far? And can we call it back? 'Yes', says Anna Kavan, an expert on psychiatric methods, and author of 'Asylum Piece', 'No' says Dr. Maxwell Jones, who is experimenting in group-psychiatry at a well-known neurosis centre. What Dr. Edward Glover, psycho-analyst and author of 'War, Sadism and Pacifism' says in his summing-up, we leave you to discover.

But to those interested in the 'Case of Bill Williams' we have supplied two additional case histories. A short story which gives a graphic account of the onset of an attack of schizophrenia, one where the State would probably be right to intervene, and a long account of the madness of Gérard de Nerval, a schizophrenic whose madness, even though it led to an early and tragic death, contributed more to the community than many another's sanity. The 'Case of Bill Williams' in fact, is by no means closed and HORIZON invites correspondence on it.

Subscribers who have not yet sent in their votes for the HORIZON prizes for last year are again reminded that they have till March to do so, and that if enough subscribers do not exercise this privilege, the vote will be withdrawn from them in 1944 and handed over to our contributors.

HORIZON would like to thank Mr. Oscar Williams for all the trouble he has taken for us with his Anthology; also to apologize to Mr. MacNeice for spelling his name wrongly in the last number. Also to congratulate the *Cornhill* on its reappearance as a quadrimestrial under the editorship of Mr. Peter Quennell.

# A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN VERSE

*Selected by OSCAR WILLIAMS*

## INTRODUCTION

I PRESENT this group to the readers of HORIZON as a sample of modern American verse. American poets do not come in cliques or schools as English poets do. Distances in America are too big, the American public too cold. My choice includes work from poets aged 24 to 64, each vital, individual and American, yet not at all 'American' in the Whitman sense or the 'regional' sense. It is important that English readers realize that only the 'phonies' here are today influenced by the Whitman looseness and oratory. It is also salutary for those not well read in American poetry to remember that T. S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Mo., and educated at Harvard.

In contrast to current English verse, which is romantic, lush and excitable, still under the influence of Shelley, etc., American poetry, much influenced by Donne, is tight, subtle and classical. American poets in general are pre-occupied with nuances of form, probably because they are all too well aware of the Whitman tradition in its progressive decay into bombast. American poetry at its contemporary best is disciplined, well able to bear analytical criticism. It is alive, it has the potential influence-values which it gathers unconsciously from the energies of one of the two most self-confident peoples on earth today.

We do not at present have spectacularly individual personalities such as W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, George Barker, *et al*, but we have a general *milieu* of important verse by many very good poets. I believe that this rich extensive atmosphere of solidly good verse by a wide variety of poets is a prediction in itself that great major poetry is sure to appear in America.

It is the misfortune of British readers that American verse is not readily accessible to them (a condition aided and abetted by English editors). The present selection is a bid for English readers whose opinions I should like to get. These examples, recent poems, some of which are here published for the first time, are a



partial cross-section, not definitive. Others of these poems have appeared in America, in places out of the way of most HORIZON subscribers. Short biographies are on page 96.

OSCAR WILLIAMS

# IN DISTRUST OF MERIT

by MARIANNE MOORE

Strengthened to live, strengthened to die for  
medals and positioned victories?

They're fighting, fighting, fighting the blind  
man who thinks he sees,—

who cannot see that the enslaver is  
enslaved; the hater, harmed. O shining O

firm star, O tumultuous  
ocean lashed till small things go  
as they will, the mountainous  
wave makes us who look, know

depth. Lost at sea before they fought! O  
star of David, star of Bethlehem,

O black imperial lion  
of the Lord—emblem

of a risen world—be joined at last, be  
joined. There is hate's crown beneath which all is  
death; there's love's without which none  
is king; the blessed deeds bless  
the halo. As contagion  
of sickness makes sickness,

contagion of trust can make trust. They're  
fighting in deserts and caves, one by

one, in battalions and squadrons;

they're fighting that I

may yet recover from the disease, *my*  
*self*; some have it lightly, some will die. 'Man's

wolf to man?' And we devour  
ourselves? The enemy could not  
have made a greater breach in our  
defences. One pilot—

ing a blind man can escape him, but  
Job disheartened by false comfort knew,  
that nothing is so defeating  
as a blind man who  
can see. O alive who are dead, who are

## HORIZON

proud not to see, O small dust of the earth  
 that walks so arrogantly,  
 trust begets power and faith is  
 an affectionate thing. We  
 vow, we make this promise

to the fighting—it's a promise—'We'll  
 never hate black, white, red, yellow, Jew,  
 Gentile, Untouchable.' We are  
 not competent to  
 make our vows. With set jaw they are fighting,  
 fighting, fighting,—some we love whom we know,  
 some we love but know not—that  
 hearts may feel and not be numb.  
 It cures me; or am I what  
 I can't believe in? Some

in snow, some on crags, some in quicksands,  
 little by little, much by much, they  
 are fighting fighting fighting that where  
 there was death there may  
 be life. 'When a man is prey to anger,  
 he is moved by outside things; when he holds  
 his ground in patience patience  
 patience, that is action or  
 beauty,' the soldier's defence  
 and hardest armor for

the fight. The world's an orphans' home. Shall  
 we never have peace without sorrow?  
 without pleas of the dying for  
 help that won't come? O  
 quiet form upon the dust, I cannot  
 look and yet I must. If these great patient  
 dyings—all these agonies  
 and woundbearings and blood shed—  
 can teach us how to live, these  
 dyings were not wasted.

Hate-hardened heart, O heart of iron,  
 iron is iron till it is rust.  
 There never was a war that was  
 not inward; I must  
 fight till I have conquered in myself what  
 causes war, but I would not believe it.  
 I inwardly did nothing.  
 O Iscariotlike crime!  
 Beauty is everlasting  
 and dust is for a time.



NO POSSUM, NO SOP, NO TATERS

*by* WALLACE STEVENS

He is not here, the old sun,  
 As absent as if we were asleep.  
 The field is frozen. The leaves are dry.  
 Bad is final in this light.  
 In this bleak air the broken stalks  
 Have arms without hands. They have trunks  
 Without legs or, for that, without heads.  
 They have heads in which a captive cry  
 Is merely the moving of a tongue.  
 Snow sparkles like eyesight falling to earth,  
 Like seeing fallen brightly away.  
 The leaves hop, scraping on the ground.  
 It is deep January. The sky is hard.  
 The stalks are firmly rooted in ice.  
 It is in this solitude, a syllable,  
 Out of these gawky flutterings,  
 Intones its single emptiness,  
 The savagest hollow of winter-sound.  
 It is here, in this bad, that we reach  
 The last purity of the knowledge of good.  
 The crow looks rusty as he rises up.  
 Bright is the malice in his eye . . .  
 One joins him there for company,  
 But at a distance, in another tree.

DEATH BY RARITY

*by* MARGUERITE YOUNG

I fear, I fear the rarity  
 Of nighthawk, swift, ruby throat; I fear extinct  
 The roseate spoonbill and snowy egret slain  
 By no known enemy,  
 Slain by no known war of devastation  
 To all and one, the flamingo, the heath hen, and wild  
 Trumpeter swan, however covert they are  
 Slain where ever they are,

## HORIZON

For rarity precedes extinction as sickness  
 Comes before death, there is weariness within  
 The perfection of the shell, and the perfect bird  
 Never will be born.

I fear that rarity overwhelming all marvelous  
 Names of birds whose names are poems  
 And the rarity of this so personal blood  
 Sleet in the golden vein.

## SPECULATIVE EVENING

by MARGUERITE YOUNG

If there were no past, but only this specious present, if twinkle ago  
 By the edict of a heavenly geometer  
 Had been created this earth of pointed fir trees, December snow,  
 Jewel eye, yet who should realize the colossal joke?

For if earth were created with our equipment of memory,  
 Then would this present seem entire fragment and whole  
 To sailor, soul, spectator of storm, and all would be  
 Exactly clouded, and the snow goose put out white at its maturity

And the albino crow who gets no partner in mortal marriage  
 Would tap at the window in surf among red berries,  
 And I myself would feel my crucial age  
 And cry for ambassadors like dolls among the wrinkled stars,

And I, poor pensioner in nature's house  
 In smoky beams of evening's blowing light  
 Would behold fallacious futures, impermanence of fact, brightest  
     of stars, Sirius,  
 And harpers harping on a sea of glass.

## SCYROS

by KARL SHAPIRO

*'snuffle and sniff and handkerchief'*

The doctor punched my vein  
 The captain called me Cain  
 Upon my belly sat the sow of fear  
     With coins on either eye  
 The President came by  
 And whispered to the braid what none could hear



High over where the storm  
 Stood steadfast cruciform  
 The golden eagle sank in wounded wheels  
 White Negroes laughing still  
 Crept fiercely on Brazil  
 Turning the navies upward on their keels

Now one by one the trees  
 Stripped to their naked knees  
 To dance upon the heaps of shrunken dead  
 The roof of England fell  
 Great Paris tolled her bell  
 And China staunched her milk and wept for bread

No island singly lay  
 But lost its name that day  
 The Ainu dived across the plunging sands  
 From dawn to dawn to dawn  
 King George's birds came on  
 Strafing the tulips from his children's hands

Thus in the classic sea  
 South-east from Thessaly  
 The dynamited merman washed ashore  
 And tritons dressed in steel  
 Trolled heads with rod and reel  
 And dredged potatoes from the Aegean floor

Hot in the sky and green  
 Where Germans have been seen  
 The moon leaks metal on the Atlantic fields  
 Pink boys in birthday shrouds  
 Loop lightly through the clouds  
 Or coast the peaks of Finland on their shields

That prophet year by year  
 Lay still but could not hear  
 Where scholars tapped to find his new remains  
 Gog and Magog ate pork  
 In vertical New York  
 And war began next Wednesday on the Danes.

## HORIZON

## JUBILO

ALLEN TATE

*Hit mus' be now de Kingdom comin'  
And de year of Jubilo!*

Tailspinning from the shelves of sky  
See how it dips and tacks and tosses  
To cast a beam in the mind's eye,  
Who will count the gains and the losses  
On the Day of Jubilo

Public accountant with double entry  
Enter in red war's final cast  
In the black column the pacing sentry  
Old women picking the hogs' mast  
For the Day of Jubilo

Lean to the crowded air and hear,  
Eavesdropper, how it goes inside  
Your own deaf and roaring ear  
Boys caress the machines they ride  
On the Day of Jubilo

After the dry and sticking tongue  
After our incivility  
Who will inflate the poet's lung  
Gone flat of this indignity  
Till the Day of Jubilo

Scholar, no dog will have your day  
For all your capital's run out  
Wry baby in wet disarray  
Scholar, prepare your meagre clout  
For the Day of Jubilo

Under the slip and slide of day  
Think at the end you'll never be  
Trapped in a fox-hole of decay  
Nor snip nor glide of history  
After the Day of Jubilo

All our jubilant eyes are raised  
Jubilo. Over the barbican  
On the great Day pure and dazed  
Empty of heart the empty man  
Of the Day of Jubilo



Then on the Day of Jubilo  
 The patient bares his arm at dawn  
 To suck the blood's transfusing glow  
 And then when all the blood is gone  
 (For the day of Jubilo)

Salt serum stays his arteries  
 Sly tide threading the ribs of sand  
 Till his lost being dries and cries  
 For that unspeakable salt land  
 Beyond the Day of Jubilo

## IN THE NAKED BED, IN PLATO'S CAVE

*by* DELMORE SCHWARTZ

In the naked bed, in Plato's cave  
 Reflected headlights slowly slid the wall,  
 The newsboys echoed from the afternoon  
 Crying out Europe! Europe! near and far,  
 Wind troubled the window curtains all night long,  
 A fleet of trucks strained uphill, grinding,  
 Their freights hooded, as usual.  
 The ceiling lightened again, the slanting diagram  
 Slid slowly forth. Hearing the milkman's chop,  
 His striving up the stair, the bottles' chink,  
 I rose from bed, I lit a cigarette,  
 And walked to the window. The stony street  
 Displayed the stillness in which buildings stand,  
 The street-lamp's vigil and the horse's patience.  
 The winter sky's pure capital  
 Turned me back to bed with exhausted eyes.

Strangeness grew in the motionless air. The loose  
 Film grayed. Shaking wagons, hooves, waterfalls,  
 Sounded far off, increasing, louder and nearer.  
 A car coughed, starting. Morning, softly  
 Melting the air, lifted the half-covered chair  
 From underseas, kindled the looking-glass,  
 Distinguished the dresser and the white wall.  
 The bird called tentatively, whistled, called,  
 Bubbled and whistled, so! Perplexed, still wet  
 With sleep, affectionate, hungry and cold. So, so,  
 O son of man, the ignorant night, the travail  
 Of early morning, the mystery of beginning  
 Again and again, while Time is unforgiven.

## 90 NORTH

*by* RANDALL JARRELL

At home, in my flannel gown, like a bear to its floe,  
I clambered to bed; up the globe's impossible sides  
I sailed all night—till at last, with my black beard,  
My furs and my dogs, I stood at the northern pole.

There in the childish night my companions lay frozen,  
The stiff furs knocked at my starveling throat,  
And I gave my great sigh—the flakes came huddling;  
Were they really my end? In the darkness I turned to my rest.

Here, the flag snaps in the glare and silence  
Of the unbroken ice. And I stand here,  
The dogs bark, my beard is black, and I stare  
At the North Pole. And now what? Why, go back.

Turn as I please, my step is to the south.  
The world—my world spins on this final point  
Of cold and wretchedness: all lines, all winds  
End in this whirlpool I at last discover.

And it is meaningless. In the child's bed  
After the night's voyage, in that warm world  
Where people work and suffer till the death  
That crowns the pain—in that Cloud-Cuckoo-Land

I reached my North and it had meaning.  
Here at the actual pole of my existence,  
Where all that I have done is meaningless,  
Where I die or live by accident alone—

Where, living or dying, I am still alone;  
Here where North, the night, the berg of death  
Crowd to me out of the ignorant darkness,  
I see at last that all the knowledge

I wrung from the darkness—that the darkness flung me—  
Is worthless as ignorance: nothing comes from nothing,  
The darkness from the darkness. Pain comes from the darkness  
And we call it wisdom. It is pain.



THE STRANGER

*by* JEAN GARRIGUE

Now upon this piteous year  
 I sit in Denmark beside the quai  
 And nothing that the fishers say  
 Or the children carrying boats  
 Can recall me from that place  
 Where sense and wish departed me  
 Whose very shores take on  
 The whiteness of anon.  
 For I beheld a stranger there  
 Who moved ahead of me,  
 So tensile and so dancer made  
 That like a thief I followed her  
 Though my heart was so alive  
 I felt myself the equal beauty.  
 But when at last a turning came  
 Like the branching of a river  
 And I saw if she walked on  
 She would be gone forever,  
 Fear then so wounded me  
 As fell upon my ear  
 The voice a blind man dreams  
 And broke on me the smile  
 I dreamed as deaf men hear,  
 I stood there like a spy,  
 My tongue and eyelids taken  
 In such necessity.  
 Now upon this piteous year  
 The rains of Autumn fall.  
 Where may she be?  
 I suffered her to disappear  
 Who hunger in the prison of my fear.  
 That lean and brown, that stride,  
 That cold and melting pride,  
 For whom the river like a clear,  
 Melodic line and the distant carrousel  
 Where lovers on their beasts of play  
 Rose and fell, that wayfare where the swan adorned  
 With every wave and eddy  
 The honor of his sexual beauty,  
 Create her out of sorrow  
 That, never perishing,  
 Is a stately thing.

## POEM

*by* E. E. CUMMINGS

what if a much of a which of a wind  
 gives the truth to summer's lie;  
 bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun  
 and yanks immortal stars awry?  
 Blow king to beggar and queen to seem  
 (blow friend to fiend: blow space to time)  
 —when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,  
 the single secret will still be man

what if a keen of a lean wind flays  
 screaming hills with sleet and snow:  
 strangles valleys by ropes of thing  
 and stifles forests in white ago?  
 Blow hope to terror; blow seeing to blind  
 (blow pity to envy and soul to mind)  
 —whose hearts are mountains, roots are trees,  
 it's they shall cry hello to the spring

what if a dawn of a doom of a dream  
 bites this universe in two,  
 peels forever out of his grave  
 and sprinkles nowhere with me and you?  
 Blow soon to never and never to twice  
 (blow life to isn't: blow death to was)  
 —all nothing's only our hugest home;  
 the most who die, the more we live

## THE SHUTTLE

*by* OSCAR WILLIAMS

I sit on the bound called ten stories tall  
 My eye flattens to a floor, a wall,  
 Like any bird on the nest anywhere  
 I live in a constant nothing of air  
 Some forty years up and ten stories high  
 A hundred inventions ahead of the sky,  
 With a ladder of ancestors holding me up  
 Whose rungs into history mystery droop,  
 But here I am where God's feathers fly  
 Like the child in the rhyme in the sky so high.

Over the plumes of your thoughts I see  
 Your tired heart that rests beside a tree;  
 From the tenth platform of my tithe of time  
 I perceive you exhausted in your prime,  
 With heaven collaterally circling around  
 Your presence that holds the landscape down,  
 With birds disappearing in the sponge of leaves  
 And sundown painting your hopes in sheaves—  
 I speak into a tube for your distant ear,  
 You look up at me across the miles so clear.

Is it your look makes my room to descend  
 As though I were inside a shaft of the end?  
 The floorspace edges from under my feet  
 The breadth of a sword's edge of monstrous speed;  
 I grasp for the desperate hold of a tear,  
 For the bend in space or the turn of the year,  
 But out of the thousands not the least star  
 Can keep me from falling too fast too far;  
 And suddenly there beneath your tree I lie  
 With you at the window ten stories so high.

## SHOPPING FOR MEAT IN WINTER

by OSCAR WILLIAMS

What lewd, naked and revolting shape is this?  
 A frozen oxtail in the butcher's shop  
 Long and lifeless upon the big block of wood  
 On which the ogre's axe begins *chop chop*.

The sun like incense fumes on the smoky glass,  
 The street frets with people, the winter wind  
 Throws knives, prices dangle from shoppers' mouths  
 While the grim vegetables, on parade, bring to mind

The great countryside bathed in golden sleep,  
 The trees, the bees, the soft peace everywhere—  
 I think of the cow's tail, how all summer long  
 It beat the shapes of harps into the air.



## AJANTA CAVES

by MURIEL RUKEYSER

IN the Ajanta caves, in India, a series of frescoes was done by Buddhist painter-monks, working in a tradition that is one of the bases of these poems. The religious analogy between the space of the body and the space of the universe is made, here. The walls of the cave—reality—are taken as the deepest background. The treatment of bodies in these scenes of the life of the gods, painted between the second century B.C. and the sixth century A.D., makes the figures round but shadowless, starting forward, seeming to fill the cave. Reality—the cave—is fully accepted; the function of this art is to fill with creation an accepted real world.

## I AJANTA

Came in my full youth to the midnight cave  
 nerves ringing; and this thing I did alone.  
 Wanting my fulness and not a field of war,  
 for the world considered annihilation, a star  
 called Wormwood rose and flickered, shattering  
 bent light over the dead boiling up in the ground,  
 the biting yellow of their corrupted lives  
 streaming to war, denying all our words.  
 Nothing was left among the tainted weather  
 but world-walking and shadowless Ajanta.  
 Hallucination and the metal laugh  
 in clouds, and the mountain-spectre riding storm.  
 Nothing was certain but a moment of peace,  
 a hollow behind the unbreakable waterfall.  
 All the way to the cave, the teeming forms of death,  
 and death, the price of the body, cheap as air.  
 I blessed my heart on the expiation journey  
 for it had never been unable to suffer:  
 when I met the man whose face looked like the future,  
 when I met the whore with the dying red hair,  
 the child myself who is my murderer.  
 So came I between heaven and my grave  
 past the serene smile of the *voyeur*, to  
 this cave where the myth enters the heart again.

## II THE CAVE

Space to the mind, the painted cave of dream.  
 This is not a womb, nothing but good emerges:  
 this is a stage, neither unreal nor real  
 where the walls are the world, the rocks and palaces  
 stand on a borderland of blossoming ground.  
 If you stretch your hand, you touch the slope of the world  
 reaching in interlaced gods, animals, and men.  
 There is no background. The figures hold their peace  
 in a web of movement. There is no frustration,  
 every gesture is taken, everything yields connections.  
 The heavy sensual shoulders, the thighs, the blood-born flesh  
 and earth turning into color, rocks into their crystals,  
 water to sound, fire to form; life flickers  
 uncounted into the supple arms of love.  
 The space of these walls is the body's living space;  
 tear open your ribs and breathe the color of time  
 where nothing leads away, the world comes forward  
 in flaming sequences. Pillars and prisms. Riders  
 and horses and the figures of consciousness,  
 red cow grows long, goes running through the world.  
 Flung into movement in carnal purity,  
 these bodies are sealed—warm lip and crystal hand  
 in a jungle of light. Color-sheeted, seductive  
 foreboding eyelid lowered on the long eye,  
 fluid and vulnerable. The spaces of the body  
 are suddenly limitless, and riding flesh  
 shapes constellations over the golden breast,  
 confusion of scents and illuminated touch—  
 monster touch, the throat printed with brightness,  
 wide outlined gesture where the bodies rise.  
 Bells, and the spirit flashing. The religious bells,  
 bronze under the sunlight like breasts ringing,  
 bronze in the closed air, the memory of walls,  
 great sensual shoulders in the web of time.

## III LES TENDRESSES BESTIALES

A procession of caresses alters the ancient sky  
 until new constellations are the body shining:  
 There's the Hand to steer by, there the horizon Breast,  
 and the Great Stars kindling the fluid hill.  
 All the rooms open into magical boxes,  
 nothing is tilted, everything flickers  
 sexual and exquisite.

## HORIZON

The panther with its throat along my arm  
 turns black and flows away.  
 Deep in all streets passes a faceless whore  
 and the checkered men are whispering one word.  
 The face I know becomes the night-black rose.  
 The sharp face is now an electric fan  
 and says one word to me.  
 The dice and the alcohol and the destruction  
 have drunk themselves and cast.  
 Broken bottle of loss, and the glass  
 turned bloody into the face.  
 Now the scene comes forward, very clear,  
 Dream-singing, airborne, surrenders the recalled,  
 the gesture arrives riding over the breast,  
 singing, singing, tender atrocity,  
 the silver derelict wearing fur and claws.  
 O love, I stood under the apple branch,  
 I saw the whipped bay and the small dark islands,  
 and night sailing the river and the foghorn's word.  
 My life said to you: I want to love you well.  
 The wheel goes back and I shall live again,  
 but the wave turns, my birth arrives and spills  
 over my breast the world bearing my grave,  
 and your eyes open in earth. You touched my life.  
 My life reaches the skin, moves under your smile,  
 and your shoulders and your throat and your face and  
 your thighs flash.

I am haunted by interrupted acts,  
 introspective as a leper, enchanted  
 by a repulsive clew,  
 a gross and fugitive movement of the limbs.  
 Is this the love that shook the lights to flame?  
 Sheeted avenues thrash in the wind,  
 torn streets, the savage parks.  
 I am plunged deep. Must find the midnight cave.

## IV BLACK BLOOD

A habit leading to murder, smoky laughter  
 hated at first, but necessary later.  
 Alteration of motives. To stamp in terror  
 around the deserted harbor, down the hill  
 until the woman laced into a harp  
 screams and screams and the great clock strikes,  
 swinging its giant figures past the face.  
 The Floating Man rides on the ragged sunset



asking and asking. Do not say, Which loved?  
Which was beloved? Only, Who most enjoyed?  
Armored ghost of rage, screaming and powerless.  
Only find me and touch my blood again.  
Find me. A girl runs down the street  
singing Take me yelling Take me Take  
Hang me from the clapper of a bell  
and you as hangman ring it sweet tonight,  
for nothing clean in me is more than cloud  
unless you call it. — As I ran I heard  
a black voice beating among all that blood:  
'Try to live as if there were a God.'

## V THE BROKEN WORLD

Came to Ajanta cave, the painted space of the breast,  
the real world where everything is complete,  
there are no shadows, the forms of incompleteness.  
The great cloak blows in the light, rider and horse arrive,  
the shoulders turn and every gift is made.  
No shadows fall. There is no source of distortion.  
In our world, a tree casts the shadow of a woman,  
a man the shadow of a phallus, a hand raised  
the shadow of the whip.  
Here everything is itself,  
here all may stand  
on summer earth.  
Brightness has overtaken every light,  
and every myth netted itself in flesh.  
New origins, and peace given entire  
and the spirit alive.  
In the shadowless cave  
the naked arm is raised.  
Animals arrive,  
interlaced, and gods  
interlaced, and men  
flame-woven.  
I stand and am complete.  
Crawls from the door,  
black at my two feet  
the shadow of the world.  
World, not yet one,  
enters the heart again.  
The naked world, and the old noise of tears,  
the fear, the expiation and the love,  
a world of the shadows and alone.  
The journey, and the struggles of the moon.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

MARIANNE MOORE, one-time editor of the *Dial*, is considered America's most distinguished poet. Her animal poems resemble carved gems. Her fine war poem repays careful reading.

WALLACE STEVENS, one of the most eminent of American poets, was born in 1879, Pa., educated at Harvard; now the vice-president of a large insurance company at Hartford, Conn.; he wrote his poem especially for this group in HORIZON.

MARGUERITE YOUNG is a young poet studying for a Ph.D. at the University of Iowa; author of one book of verse.

KARL SHAPIRO is a young poet widely acclaimed this year for his first book, *Person, Place and Thing*, just published here by Secker & Warburg; serving with the forces at present in Australia.

ALLEN TATE is a well-known American poet, author of many volumes of which the latest is *Selected Poems*.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ, one of the most important of the younger poets, is the author of *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*.

RANDALL JARRELL, a young poet, taught at the University of Texas; now in the army.

JEAN GARRIGUE, a young poet first discovered by John Crowe Ransom in his *Kenyon Review*, now teaches at the University of Iowa.

E. E. CUMMINGS is a well-known *avant-garde* American poet, educated at Harvard, author of *Collected Poems, 1938*, and of the famous war book, *The Enormous Room*.

OSCAR WILLIAMS started writing poetry for the second time in 1937 after a sixteen-year silence; two books of verse, three anthologies, the largest of which is *New Poems, 1943*.

MURIEL RUKEYSER has published three books of poems; is in her twenties and lives in New York: she submitted 'Ajanta' directly to HORIZON.

(NOTE: Mr. Williams' own poems were specially selected for this group by George Barker.)

# THE CASE OF BILL WILLIAMS

## I—ANNA KAVAN

PRIVATE WILLIAMS is a neurotic case. Society doesn't approve of Private Williams. The hospital staff takes a very poor view of him. Bill Williams is unpopular with the nurses, and the doctors are anxious to get him out of their wards. They say he has a bad influence on the other patients. They have no time for him because, in spite of pep talks and electrical treatment and benzidrene tablets, he persists in being resentful and unfriendly.

apathetic and slovenly, unco-operative and bad-tempered, rebellious and disintegrated. Well, too little sleep, too much tension, too much danger, too much noise, are apt to disintegrate some individuals after a time. That's the trouble, of course. Bill Williams is still obstinately hanging on to himself as an individual. If only they could get him to exchange his unsatisfactory, unstable, unkempt individuality with all its straggle of bits and pieces, for a nice, neat, standardized, dependable number, everyone's problems would be at an end.

Inevitably, right from the start, the social machine is the enemy of the individual Bill Williams. It limits the avenues of his mind, it trips his feet and lays traps for his fingertips and his tongue. Every door closing, every form filled in, every official, every broadcast, every regulation, every propaganda slogan, is a munition in the war; Society versus Bill Williams.

Society has designed the universe of the machine, the machine functioning invariably true to the blue-print, the spare parts interchangeable, instantly replaceable, unlimited, always at hand. The units of Society are the parts of the machine, patented, docile; the well-adjusted. Bill Williams struggles for the universe of man, against the universe of the machine. In such a struggle the personality naturally loses its wholeness. The mind turns in on itself because its outlets are beset with destruction. Hate and fear fly off at a tangent. The emotions swirl steeply into chaos, and the falling heart is aware of ultimate desolation; the small hyacinth that blooms in the heart withers, loses its scent, turns black, is killed. At the same time Christ is killed, Shakespeare is killed, Columbus perishes. Love also does not survive long.

And they have no time for Private Williams who is resentful. They do not care how the dead flower putrifies in the heart to a slime of corruption; how panic bolts through the eyeballs; how the brain whirls itself sick; how the thoughts flap and batter about like trapped birds.

What society wants is the number and not the man. What society wants is the machine-part which does the job (and that only) for which it's designed, and can be immediately replaced by one of a million others when it wears out. Society wants wheels running smoothly together, not men taking hands with men. Society does not want a man to live with a live flower inside him but to harden like mineral and live the life of a wheel. Yes,



above all, the un-mortal, collective, prefabricated mechanism of society abhors the incalculable, the unique individual element, the unharnessed creative element, the flower which is apt to burst into flame and turn life into a blazing poem instead of an engineer's workshop. That flower at all costs it is determined to cut down stone dead.

Society has no use for Bill Williams, and what it needs to replace him is the non-individual, the standard, the impersonal, the sterile, the perfected, the number. The patented and perfect machine-part. B.W.9000, completely devoid of dream, hyacinth, heart, laughter, incapable of original thought, and yet able to fulfil efficiently and reliably his mechanical rôle. They can't understand his resistance. If only he would co-operate and discard his neurosis and be secure and passive and numbered and nullified. But Bill Williams fights on in neurotic jungles and at nightmare barricades for his own self; the solitary human man against the millions of well-adjusted ratchets and cogs and pistons and belts and wheels. One of the heroes of our time. Private Williams, the inconvenient, un-downed individualist, doggedly sticking to his uniqueness through neurosis and nightmare, refusing to surrender himself to the machine. And what chance is there for him?

What's to be done with the incorrigible and undesirable individuality of Bill Williams? Something will have to be done about it, because it's hardly less obnoxious to society in the joyous, comical fight for survival called peace than it is in war.

The psychiatrist has the answer all ready on the tip of his tongue. 'Be well adjusted and happy,' the psychiatrist says; 'that's just how simple it is. Be safe and industrious, submit to your environment, and become the contented cog.'

The psychiatrist's words deserve every consideration, for he, presumably, is the apotheosis of good social adjustment: he's the authorized voice of the social order, the man who knows all the answers.

And after all, this Society that we live in is what suits us: we made it, not God or some exterior force. We voted for factories, gas-masks, tanks, torpedoes, dive bombers, flying fortresses, commandos, parachutes, sirens, famines, concentration camps, Lidices, Hamburgs, Leaders, fan-dancers, machinery, machine slaves, psychiatrists, alcohol, drugs, dehydrated foods, artificial sunlight, double summertime, blackouts, contraceptives, jitterbugs,

W.A.A.F.S., W.R.E.N.S., A.T.S., poodle dogs, police dogs, schizophrenia, talking lovebirds, gonorrhœa, pyorrhœa, anti-Semitism, spiritualism, collectivism, and so on and so forth. This is our world; and if those are the things we want in it, it's our business alone. If we want to turn our world into a mathematically systematized confusion of dead machines instead of a slight pause in eternity where men can love and create and eat and laugh and walk about in the sun, no god or anything else is coming along to stop us.

Unless Bill Williams happens to pull off the trick. Unless neurosis becomes universal. Unless a tonic epidemic of madness plazes across the world like a comet and blasts all the machinery into smithereens. Only it looks like being too late already. It looks as if Private Williams is doomed to extinction, along with the moa, the Aztec, the pterodactyl. And what comes afterwards when all the Bill Williamses in the world are wiped out, washed up, liquidated, extinguished? What will the bright metallic dawn be like when we break into that orderly new realm, that mechanized realm in which individualism will have vanished completely—because life itself will have become one vast omnipotent machine?

## II—MAXWELL JONES

I FIND it impossible to give any satisfactory answer because I am aware of no concrete argument, or situation, which has been developed; nor has the writer made clear what she means by such terms as 'neurotic', 'individualist' and 'society'. One simply gets a fragmentary picture dealing largely with Bill Williams' emotional state, which is supposed to result from the restrictions imposed on him by an antagonistic group called 'Society'. There is no possibility of knowing what the facts are; the personality, background, temperament, training, intelligence, in fact everything that goes to make up Bill Williams as an individual has been omitted. Under such circumstances I cannot reply as a psychiatrist, and can only give some random associations which are evoked by this very provocative exposition.

Society as described by Anna Kavan seems to be a mad mixture comprising everyone who in some way limits or frustrates Bill Williams; but Bill Williams himself is a part of society, and

perhaps a very important part. His individuality inevitably affects his contacts, just as the group of people he knows must affect him. It would almost appear as though the writer thought of society as being made up of millions of 'average people' who had met and decided on their line of conduct in every conceivable situation. Instead, one has only to take random samples of groups of say, ten people, from any community to find how fundamentally their views and behaviour vary. Not only that, but if the groups were segregated for a sufficient length of time, each group would come to have its own individuality which would, in the main, be that of its leader or leaders.

Bill Williams is painted in emotional colours, but we know nothing of him otherwise. He is resentful, and rebellious, bad-tempered and unco-operative; he is incalculable, unique, and has poetic potentialities. He is one of the heroes of our time; why? Simply because he is to 'Society' inconvenient, un-down-hearted, doggedly sticking to his uniqueness through neurosis and nightmare, refusing to surrender himself to the machine. It is impossible from the evidence available to know whether this is Bill Williams' own subjective evaluation of the situation, or whether he has, in fact, potentialities which would have flourished under more favourable conditions.

If I understand you correctly, Miss Kavan, Bill Williams is not only a neurotic, but an individualist. It is not clear to me if you use the two terms synonymously, but for the sake of simplicity let us first assume that you do not; let us suppose that your individualist has no neurosis, and is simply in danger of having his individuality killed by the machinery of society. Your argument then is that Bill Williams is obstinately hanging on to himself as an individual, and simply because of this society must regard him as an enemy until it can discipline him according to its group standards, and then absorb him as a unit. Here, I think, we come to the crux of the situation in that, as I see it, Bill Williams finds that his individualism does not work, and is unhappy for reasons which are the very opposite of those which you put forward. He wants society to accept him as an individual, and cannot see that by doing so he automatically becomes socialized; he wants society to adapt to him, rather than that he should adapt to society. If you doubt this, then think of the lives of people who seem most harmonious and happy, even



though they be individualists. Surely they are the people who feel that their lives are in some way important, not only to themselves, but, much more significantly, to others. No matter how indirect the connection may be, their main inspiration, and feeling of self-worth, is derived from the approbation of the crowd. So my first point is that the individualist feels an outcast and rails against society because he has failed to find the social harmony which alone could make his individualism satisfy and seem more worth while, and not because he is an individualist.

If our friend's individualism is the basis for his being resentful and unfriendly, rebellious and disintegrated, then his unusual personality structure merits further study. Individualism is no more a diagnosis than is neurosis. Are you competent to evaluate his particular brand of individualism? It is very easy to be completely misled. An individualist, whose activities, behaviour and thinking, do not bring him into conflict with organized society, may not be considered abnormal by a psychiatrist. When, however, there appears to be a lack of 'normal' consideration for the rights and feelings of others, then the subject must come into conflict with society, and may find his way to a psychiatrist. Such a psychopathic individual is usually of good intelligence, and is highly plausible. Typically he has no trouble in making you like him and feel sorry for him, and only when it is too late do you find that not only does he have no intention of repaying his debts, but he feels no shame in relation to his shortcomings. You cannot understand him, and you feel that he lacks something, but that lack is certainly not individuality; rather it is the social cement which makes communal life on this planet bearable for all of us. Nor can you depend on the individual himself having any insight into his deficiencies, for instance, the homosexual seldom regards himself as abnormal, and usually feels no shame. If he develops a neurosis it is probably not the result of self-condemnation, but because society is rightly intolerant of behaviour which would jeopardize the normal biological inter-relationship of man and woman.

I hope you agree that individualism can be either socially helpful or harmful, and if the latter, it is surely reasonable that individual members of society, given the necessary training, should try to effect a change in the individual's outlook. This you may immediately see as a threat to individual freedom, but

there is no reason to think that at the present time a physician is the servant of any particular creed or party; science is an international affair, and except in the dictatorship countries, is not hampered by any national dogma. The aim of treatment in psychological medicine is not to interfere with the individual's freedom, or to make decisions for him, as is commonly believed; it is the aim of the therapist to understand his patient because in so doing, the patient comes to understand himself. The patient will frequently want the doctor to act for him, and a childlike dependence would readily be established, but as I see it, medical ethics would deny the physician the right to act in this way for a patient. This is an important point, because, if you grant it, you at the same time admit that one group of organized society which, perhaps more than any other, is in a position to interfere in the freedom of the individual, is fully cognizant of this danger, and deliberately chooses to increase rather than limit the individual's freedom.

Now come to your second point about the hyacinth. The society which is so eager to kill the hyacinth and at the same time the Christ, Shakespeare and Columbus, has taken remarkable pains to preserve and revere the memories of those whom it would (you say) destroy. Nor is it true to say that what Society wants is a number, and not the man. Never in the history of this country has such a search been made for men capable of independent action and leadership. This search goes on daily at numerous War Office Selection Boards, where scores of men are tested as to their suitability for commissions in the army. The whole trend in medicine at the present time is towards greater consideration of the individual as an individual; the new chair of Social Medicine at Oxford; the activities of the Industrial Health Research Board; the recommendations for the training of future doctors, with emphasis on training in psychiatry, social and preventive medicine, made in the recent College of Physicians' Report; the rapid growth of psychological medicine in the army, are all evidences of a growing realization of the need for greater individual freedom and consideration.

Why, when you make this plea for Bill Williams' individuality, did you make him a Private? A moment's thought must make it clear that a war calls for an army which, for the rank and file, must be made up of units, whose reaction in emergency can be

predetermined to a large extent, as a result of training. The conditioning and disciplining of men to authority, so that the body of men has only one head (the officer) and accepts the decision of authority without question, is the basis of any efficient army. The disciplining of the private soldier, and the development of initiative and leadership in the officer, go hand in hand. Surely adaptation of this kind to meet an immediate threat to the existence of a whole society cannot be deprecated, and the individualist like your Bill Williams, who fails to make the adaptation, cannot easily be defended.

I suggest that the individual who feels stifled and restricted should not immediately blame his contacts. The fault may be in him. Frustration can be either a deterrent or a spur, as you make it.

Finally, I cannot avoid the suggestion that these remarks apply more directly to the creator of Bill Williams than to Bill Williams himself. Judged on the brief presentation of his character, he would be socially insignificant, and certainly far less articulate than Miss Kavan who has a remarkable knack of stimulating thought, even when her own attitude towards the subject in hand seems unthought-out and over-emotional.

### III—EDWARD GLOVER

HAVING observed, accurately enough, that 'Society' is hostile to the recalcitrant social behaviour (externally directed symptoms) of the 'neurotic', Miss Kavan infers that there is an essential conflict between Society and the 'individualism' of the neurotic. Society, she goes on, does not suffer individualism gladly: it prefers cogs that will run without friction in the social machine. In consequence of this conflict personality is injured, instincts are inturbed and the vital core of the individual is damaged, possibly destroyed. But Society, an 'unmortal, prefabricated mechanism' doesn't care: it continues to aim at the production of standardized, impersonal units. Hence the neurotic is compelled to fight for his individuality in his own neurotic jungles. But we ourselves make Society (this, by the way, scarcely supports its 'unmortal' nature) and if we want machines nothing will stop us, unless, of course, neurosis becomes universal. And so, Miss Kavan, knowing that psychiatrists are given to lecturing their

patients on the need to adapt to and conform with their environment, holds up a representative of that faculty to ask what he has to say for himself.

Dr. Maxwell Jones, a little taken aback by the onslaught, lays his hand to the first available missile. Miss Kavan, he points out, has not defined any of her terms precisely. And so it is impossible for him, *qua* psychiatrist, to reply to her 'over-emotional' indictment. A welier opponent would have closed his case at this point. For it is true that, for example, Bill Williams sounds more 'psychopathic' than 'neurotic'. And for the matter of that it can be argued that the rôle of environment in the causation of neurosis is precipitating rather than radical. Miss Kavan would have done better to state her case in terms of the conflict between the Individual and Society. And she should have made clearer the complex interrelations between the two. Fortunately for her, Dr. Maxwell Jones, having renounced the rôle of psychiatrist, is unwary enough to describe the conflict in terms of his own psychiatric values. In so doing he is guilty of precisely the same errors he attributes to Miss Kavan, viz. using inadequately defined terms and being content with *ex-parte* (not to say superficial) views of the nature of conflict. There can be no question, he says, of regarding Society as millions of average persons taking a concerted line in regard to the 'neurotic' Bill Williams. That is true enough although Miss Kavan did not in fact suggest it. Society, he goes on, varies according to the groups of which it is composed: even if groups were segregated, they would vary according to the individuality of the leader. Now this is a strangely inadequate view which neglects the fundamental identity of all group formations. But Dr. Jones advances it in order to show that Bill Williams' conflict is of a nature quite the opposite of that suggested by Miss Kavan. In his view Bill has found that his individualism doesn't work and is unhappy because Society will not adapt to him. According to Dr. Jones, the feeling of self-worth experienced by contented individualists is derived from the approbation of the crowd. This again is a superficial view. The factors in both happiness and unhappiness lie deep in the recesses of the mind long before the adult makes his first acquaintance with social approbation.

So far, then, the honours of the debate are easy. Miss Kavan and Dr. Maxwell Jones simply interpret their data in different ways.



But Dr. Maxwell Jones is not content to let it go at that. The psychiatrist in him will out. Railing at Society, he points out, is frequently a sign of internal disharmony, and absence of conflict with Society is not in itself a sign of abnormality. So far he is on safe enough ground, although it might be argued by Miss Kavan that man's toleration of the abuses practised in the name of Society does little credit to him, and is responsible for, amongst other things, the outbreak of organized warfare. The next sentence, however, finds him skating on thin psychiatric ice. Cheerfully begging the question of what constitutes normality, he maintains that lack of normal consideration for the rights and feelings of others is 'psychopathic'. If, for example, the homosexual develops a neurosis, 'it is not the result of self-condemnation but because Society is rightly intolerant of behaviour that would jeopardize the normal biological interrelationship of man and woman'. Now this may be good psychiatry but it is bad biology, and worse psychology. And it does little to reconcile us to Dr. Maxwell Jones' subsequent claim that the psychiatrist can be entrusted with the 'improvement' of 'harmful' forms of individualism. There is, he asserts, no threat to individual freedom in this, although in the next breath he grants that the psychiatric group more than any other is in a position 'to interfere in the freedom of the individual'. But it does so for the individual's good and for the good of Society. Society doesn't really want a "number"; never has there been such a search for men capable of independent action and leadership. At last the cat is out of the bag. '*This search goes on daily at numerous War Office Selection Boards*' (my italics). Dr. Maxwell Jones' spectacular retreat soon becomes a rout, although he appears himself to be oblivious of the fact. For he goes on—'A moment's consideration must make it clear that a war calls for an army, which, *for the rank and file* (my italics) must be made up of *units* whose reaction in emergency can be predetermined . . . The *conditioning* of men to authority . . . The *disciplining* of the private soldier, and the development of initiative and leadership *in the officer* . . .'

Private Bill Williams' failure to adapt himself to this 'cannot be easily defended'.

Miss Kavan, despite her first lapses, wins easily on points. Society *does* after all like 'numbers' and is ready to 'condition' them, no doubt with the co-operation of army psychiatrists.

Given the emergency, it is prepared to crush 'the hyacinth that blooms in the heart', to use Miss Kavan's picturesque phrase.<sup>1</sup> There is in fact an inevitable and unending conflict between Society and the Individual, and, given the necessary psychological antecedents, neurosis or psychopathy may be one of the results—results by the way that call neither for attack nor for defence but for the appropriate treatment as well as for the appropriate modification of environmental conditions and regulations. But even if, as is most often the case, no manifest disorder arises from this conflict, it is not to be assumed that apparently 'well-adapted' citizens have not had their potentialities damaged by the often superstitious influences exerted by Society. The most valid indictment of Society is not that in preserving the common interests of the group it forcibly curtails the egocentricities of the individual, but that, being itself a backward organization, it lends its full force also to superstitious and irrational forms of regulation. There is for example more than a little evidence that what we call education is to a large extent concerned to restrict rather than to promote development. The individual who succeeds in withstanding these regressive social influences may find himself in a prison or a nursing home, but he deserves well of his fellow men, even if a baker's dozen of psychiatrists should label him a psychopath. It is even possible, on the principle of 'set a thief to catch a thief' that the psychopath is better qualified than the normal person to detect and repudiate the psychopathic aspects of Society.

In short, Miss Kavan's real mistake was to assume that the psychiatrist 'knows all the answers'. Psychiatry in this country,

<sup>1</sup>To her further assertion 'At the same time Christ is killed, Shakespeare is killed, Columbus perishes', Dr. Maxwell Jones retorts that Society 'has taken remarkable pains to preserve and revere the memories of those whom (Miss Kavan says) it would destroy'. But surely Dr. Maxwell Jones has forgotten the saying about stoning the prophets! We have indeed the authority of St. Mark for concluding not only that the dignitaries of Christ's own race and time considered Him blasphemous and anti-social, but that the amateur psychiatrists among His own relatives regarded Him as mad. 'And when his friends (kinsmen) heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside Himself' (in other versions: 'out of His mind', 'mad').

Columbus—queer card as he undoubtedly was—fared little better. And Shakespeare wrote some very fishy sonnets for which, Dr. Maxwell Jones' views notwithstanding, he appeared to 'feel no shame'.

at any rate, has never been a psychological science, still less a sociological discipline. It has taken two wars to jog psychiatrists out of their card-index mentality. And their recent conversion to the uses of psychological knowledge and of vocational guidance threatens to develop into one of the biggest rackets in the history of mental medicine. There aren't enough trained clinical psychologists in the whole country to look after the therapeutic needs of a single county. And if a State Mental Service is to be instituted after the war, we are faced with the possibility that it will be organized and officered by people who are less qualified to do the work than their own lay 'social workers'. There is little reason to suppose that if and when the State calls the tune, psychiatrists will not dance to it, with all their newly-acquired techniques a-dangle. There is only one way this can be avoided. Psychiatrists who, either in the Army or in civilian life, have had to put their services at the disposal of a Society-at-War, should undergo a course of treatment which, when applied by them to others, goes by the name of 'rehabilitation'. By so doing they may revive, or for the first time acquire, that understanding of human values that is essential for professional work in a Society-at-Peace.

PAUL GOODMAN  
IDDINGS CLARK

Lo! on every visage a Black Veil!—*Hawthorne.*

I

IN the assembly-room of the Northport High School they were celebrating the day before Christmas. All the children were present in the seats and a crowd of parents in the rear, and many graduates—some of whom were parents and some collegians home on vacation. The greatest hilarity and yet decorum prevailed, as always (so that many held that 'the best part of the holiday season is the High School celebration'). This year was given a pageant of the Nativity, but only half-reverent, for at intervals a great burlesque Santa Klaus rolled in, did tumble-saults, and so forth, while two end-men bandied jokes. All this was invented and directed by Mr. Iddings Clark, M.A., a teacher

of English, a mind so spirited and original, with modern notions of Art (considering the community); and these masques have since been collected and printed. He was also in charge of the singing. To see him high on the platform, waving his arms, lifted everybody to enthusiasm; ordinarily a shy, almost reserved man, on such occasions he was red with pleasure and crowned with joy. Recent students of his, home from college, crowded beneath him to the platform. The song rang through the hall:

‘Jingle bells! jingle bells!  
Jingle all the way!’

—when suddenly, in the midst of a note, the conductor fainted away, and fell from the platform on his face. A cry of horror rang through the hall. The young men who had been at his feet now bore him up; they laid him on the platform and loosened his collar—he was pale—and dashed a glass of water in his face. His eyes fluttered open and he came to. ‘It’s nothing,’ he said. ‘I see you all clearly. I am so happy having around me my friends so bright and close. Everything is exactly as it was.’

The fact is that at the moment he was about to faint—perhaps because the blood rushed from his head, or that the electric light faltered, or for some other reason—at that moment he beheld over everything a cast of darkness. He saw on each face a veil. It was the Black Veil in the harrowing story of Hawthorne (from which I have taken the motto for this story). At one instant all faces were lit up—the lights overhead ablaze and the falling snow outside—and all printed with an indulgent smile at the well-known song; the next instant, though their mouths were open wide, the sinister shadow was everywhere apparent! A teacher of literature, Iddings Clark was only too well acquainted with Hawthorne’s unnatural romance; twice a year for eight years he had read through with his classes the tale of the Minister’s Black Veil. But although each time he came to that awful outburst ‘Why do you tremble at me alone? tremble also at each other!’ he was so moved that the sweat appeared on his brow, he hardly thought that it would come to this. As if we experience works of art with impunity! The next instant he fainted away.

He sank in the dead faint and the light came and went. Then there was no more light and his soul was profoundly torn—accompanied by violent trembling and shaking in all his limbs, so that



the students among whom he had fallen felt the body quiver in their hands. This quietened, he began to rise again through the zones of light, and he had a dream: that he was walking on Hooker Street in the snow and he saw, with a sense of appalling loneliness, that all the passers-by wore half-masks like highwaymen; then he entered the school and stark naked stood before his class. With a cry, he awoke.

## 2

That night, Christmas Eve, Iddings Clark went to the home of Otto, an instructor in chemistry, to trim the tree for his five-year-old daughter. To spend the night thus had become almost a custom. 'Yet soon,' said Otto, 'she will be beyond the age for Christmas-trees.'

'I am all right,' said the English teacher in a strained voice. 'Anyway there is a compensation for everything! How well Emerson put it!'

He was famous as a decorator of trees! For here also—as in the clever masques he composed—sparkled such fancy and originality, in the dramatic contrast of white lights and the deep boughs, not without a touch of wild wit, such as a jack-in-the-box in the heart of it. People dropped in at the house where he had decorated the tree.

'How strange your tree is tonight, Iddings!' cried the chemist. 'It looks almost sinister; you can't mean to leave it so. All the tinsel, the silver globes, the dolls, candy-canes, and lights are crowded down in one corner, pell-mell, without beauty or order. The rest of the tree is black. Why have you cut out a little recess in the dark boughs, and there put, so lonely, the silver star that is supposed to ride so brightly at the top? And around it four upright candles, one above, one below, on the left, and on the right, so rigidly?'

'We must snatch at least this much order from the riot.'

'But the star itself is not balanced; it leans to one side. . . . Why did you arrange the candles in a cross? It doesn't fit Christmas.'

'They are four soldiers.'

Frau Otto looked attentively at the young man and said, 'You are feverish—I can see by your eyes.'

'Remember this afternoon—' said Otto.

'I've been neglecting a cold; it's nothing. Perhaps you could give me an aspirin tablet.'

She dosed him with two, and a cup of hot milk to wash them down. 'You can't go out now in a sweat,' she said. 'We must put you up overnight.'

'Oh!'

'We'll sit up just a few minutes.'

At the opportunity to stay and talk the English teacher was overjoyed. He smiled and at once started to talk about himself, saying, 'I remember when I was a boy, I lived in Boston, and at night I used to walk on Washington Avenue, among the bright lights, and look in the faces of all the people! Dr. Otto, did *you* ever do anything like that? I mean, not necessarily in Boston . . .' He sped on in the same vein. After a few moments, Frau Otto rose and excused herself—though indeed there was nothing scandalous that he had to say; for what could a person so young and sober have to confess?

'You're strange, Iddings!' said Otto, thinking of the uncanny tree, which, he felt, would frighten his child. 'Maybe I ought to call the doctor.'

'A different person exactly!' said Clark. 'I don't apologize for talking about myself because nothing is more important than that we understand one another.'

'I understand you less and less.'

Soon it was past midnight. The chemist began to foresee that the Christmas in his house was ruined; in the morning he would not be up to greet his daughter; and what a rude fright was in store for her when she saw the Christmas tree. He speculated on the possibility of putting his guest to bed and then stealing down to redecorate it. He could not foresee that this tree would be the merriest his daughter ever had; for throughout the morning, her newly-gotten toys—dolls, a house and furniture, a mechanical fire-engine—all lying neglected, she kept climbing a chair to right the lopsided star and then, dancing for joy, knocked it away again with paper balls aimed from across the room.

In the afternoon, several visitors, teachers, dropped in at Dr. Otto's—Messrs. Bell and Flint; Dr. Croydon, the dean; and Miss Cohalan, the registrar. Iddings Clark continued, in the same nervously intimate strain; his sleep had been only moderately

feverish, enough to generate almost pleasant dreams—and these he now proceeded to expound in minute detail.

Otto took Dean Croydon aside. 'He's not well. I tried to keep him in bed but he won't stay.'

'What is his temperature?'

'Normal.'

'You see,' cried Clark, 'there is nothing we're not capable of!'

'Nothing is more false!' said the Dean sharply. 'Nothing is falser than when we think ourselves creatures of any chance fancy, not as we really are—just as, brutally frank with rage, we tell our friends what we think of them in a rage, not what we really think.'

The situation rapidly became strained; the social atmosphere spoilt. Each of the friends cast his eyes upon the ground to avoid looking at the others; only Iddings himself cagerly sought them out with his eyes.

'When all know too much, all are ashamed,' thought Otto.

'It's lucky he's taken ill during the holidays; he'll be better by the start of school,' thought Dean Croydon.

## 3

On New Year's Day, which fell on a Tuesday, Iddings Clark was scheduled to deliver the annual Hooker Lecture on Literature, in the auditorium of the High School. And this year an extraordinary audience had gathered, for not only was Clark always a treat as a lecturer, but every one remembered the dramatic incident that had befallen him the week before, his dead faint in the midst of the singing. Many children, as well as the grown-ups, came to stare at him in curiosity; the ushers were given orders to shunt those boys not with their parents up into the balcony—and there they sat, staring down, their lips pressed against the shiny rail.

Dean Croydon introduced the speaker as their 'beloved friend who occasioned so much anxiety on the day before Christmas, but who has since quite recovered'. The subject of the lecture was 'The Incentives of Poetry'.

When the English teacher stepped to the front, however, he seemed the opposite of quite recovered—thin, white, with sombre eyes. Everywhere there was a leaning forward to see him better. He said in a strained voice, 'I had intended to speak of

poetry as objects and forms, and of the excitement of *inventing* something: for there is a pleasure in creating a new structure, or in elaborating a living plot, as if a man were Prometheus. But instead I shall speak of it as communication, and why it is that one person talks to another.

'But talking to you, as Meyer Liben said,' he cried suddenly, 'is like talking to a wall!'

As he spoke the pink colour mounted in his face, and his dark eyes burned. He made no gestures, but with white-knuckled fingers gripped the edges of the lectern, and his voice came forth over his hands. '*Come alive Galatea!* cried that famous sculptor, *that I may talk to you!* and he kissed a statue not yet free of the formless rock. What a sad pity that the centuries of evolution could not create a human friend for him!'

People looked at each other.

'Very lonely, said the lecturer. 'Such exact symbols—but only poets pay close attention, and they adopt this language for their very own. The poets speak only to the poets. To talk to you is like talking to a wall!'

'Our friend Iddings,' whispered Miss Cohalan, seated behind the speaker, leaning across to Dean Croydon, 'he seems beyond the bounds of order. His sentences come in gusts.'

'I have not heard more moving eloquence,' said the Dean sharply. (One would not have expected him to say this.)

'The French poet, Charles Baudelaire, wrote:

Le bourdon se lamente, et la bûche enfumée  
accompagne en fausset la pendule enrhumée,  
cependant qu'en un jeu plein de sales parfums,  
heritage fatale d'une vieille hydropique,  
le beau valet de cœur et la dame de pique  
causent sinistrement de leurs amours défunts—

'in a game full of dirty perfumes, the handsome knave of hearts and the queen of spades, gossip sinisterly of their dead loves.' Why did he say *this*?

'And he wrote:

Et le printemps et la verdure  
ont tant humilié mon cœur  
que j'ai puni sur une fleur  
l'insolence de la nature—



"the springtime and foliage humiliated me so, I took punishment on a flower for the insolence of nature." Why *this*?

'J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans— "I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old!".'

At this sentence many in the audience started.

In the balcony the children began a whispered debate.

'He says he is a thousand years old!'

'No. He says it was as if he was a thousand years old.'

'Mr. Clark is a *thousand years old*!'

'Quiet! quiet!' said the usher.

The afternoon growing late, the snow outside falling thicker—the hall became dim. Yet all, straining their eyes in the dusk, thought that they saw the speaker clearly.

'This is a common experience,' he said, 'young people in love are unable, no matter how hard they try, to keep from talking about the person.'

'But when they are *out of love*, still wounded, not yet healed, hopelessly hunting around in every direction for sympathy—then they *still* talk (making all ashamed).'

Suddenly—just as he had begun, and as he continued—he stopped. His voice no longer came in separate gusts across his white-knuckled hands. But the faint light that seemed to play on him on the platform persisted.

They began to clap and abruptly found themselves in pitch darkness. The applause grew loud. There was a hubbub of people trying to put on their coats and goloshes in the dark. At last the lights came ablaze. Blinded, the people took this opportunity to add to the infectious applause, but the speaker had slipped away during the darkness.

'Would the young man have us go around confessing each other?'

'No. It is only that we read poetry more sympathetically.'

'Come alive, Galatea! cried that famous sculptor.'

'How pale he looked at the beginning; then how flushed he became.'

'I thought that he was going to keel over again.'

'How was he at the end?'

'You couldn't tell, it was so dark.'

The next day, it was a Wednesday, school reconvened. The snow lay deep on the ground, but the sun shone brightly; it reflected from the snow and sky, and poured into the large-windowed classrooms. At nine o'clock, flushed and damp from a snowfight, the boys and girls came trooping in.

Out of his little cubicle off the English lecture-room, Mr. Clark stepped to face his class: he was stark naked except for his spectacles and a Whittier in his right hand.

With cries of fright the young people fled up the aisle and through the doors they had just entered; before the period-gong had finished sounding, the classroom was emptied—except of one small girl who sat spellbound in the front row, and a boy who stopped near the door on his way out.

'I'll tell Dean Croydon,' he said, and left.

Now Rea, the small girl, and the teacher of English were left alone, facing each other, she seated behind a desk, he standing naked beside his table.

'Why don't you run off with the others, child?' said Iddings.

'I'm hot and tired with playing; I'd rather stay here for the class.'

'They have an unexpected holiday out of me.'

'Won't there be a class, Mr. Clark?'

'The assignment was *Snowbound*, by Whittier.'

'I read it all!' cried the girl.

'It's not a great poem. What the devil prompted him to write it?'

She stared at him closely, from head to foot, and said, 'Is it true, what they say, Mr. Clark, that you are a thousand years old?'

'A thousand years! Heavens no.'

'They say that you said you was a thousand years old, and I see that in some places you're grown all over with hair.'

'I am 31,' he said smiling.

'I'm 13, just the opposite,' said Rea. She kept looking up into his face.

'What's your name, girl?' he said sharply, 'my glasses are sweated over and I can't see you clearly.'

'Rea.'

'Rea! that's a strange name. It means the guilty one. Rea. Is there any of the boys you love?'

'Donald Worcester.'

'Come here, child,' he said in a tight voice. 'Have you told him that you love him?'

'I wrote on the school-wall with chalk,' she cried, 'REA LOVES DONALD W. Just as if somebody else wrote it.'

She rose from her bench and came beside the teacher.

'That's *right*!' he said. 'Now he must tell you.'

At this—as if for no reason—she burst into sobs. At the same time the door in the rear opened, and in came the Dean with a posse of instructors summoned from their classes for this extraordinary occasion. With a cry of fright the girl fled across the bars of sunlight out of the room.

'She's crying. What did you do to her?' asked the Dean.

'I did not!'

'Iddings! what's the meaning of this?'

'It's the story of Hawthorne's, *The Minister's Black Veil*.'

'I don't remember. It's many years since most of us read Hawthorne,' said the Dean.

'I at least shan't wear a black veil!' exclaimed Iddings Clark exaltedly, and a wave of colour swept over him, from his feet to his forehead.

The Dean took off his coat and flung it round the shoulders of his trembling friend.

'This is serious; this is awful, Iddings Clark,' he said. 'We won't hear the end of it. Where are your clothes? Get dressed. It's *my* fault; I knew it was coming. At least we'll try to hush the matter up. It won't come before the School Board. But how can I answer for the consequences?'

STEPHEN SPENDER

## THE WORK AND OPINIONS OF CECIL COLLINS

AT the age of thirty-five, Cecil Collins is a painter whose work is still only known to a small circle, though, with the exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery, it will soon be more widely appreciated. It seems natural to associate Collins with young poets like Treece

and Hendry, rather than with painters like Henry Moore, John Piper and Graham Sutherland. His vision is more explosive, his idiom less obviously characterized by a strong individuality than the work of these more established artists. As with the 'apocalyptic' poets, together with his explosive visions, there goes a relaxation of the tension which makes one always conscious of an intellectual problem in the work of Henry Moore.

This tension, which is present in much painting and poetry of the 'thirties, was probably the result of the effort of artists like Moore and Sutherland both to express and control ideas which were inevitably terrifying. The difference between the 'thirties and the 'forties is that the artists of the 'thirties, faced by the same problems as all humanity is confronted with today, felt some need to construct a political, moral or intellectual framework within which they could comprehend them: hence the extremes of abstractionism and social realism—the one an attempt to dehumanize violence and state it as a purely abstract theoretical problem, the other an attempt to make it 'matey', if overpowering.

With surrealism came the complete breakdown of the attempt to understand the dreams within and the nightmares outside our civilization. All that remained was to state them, or rather, to use oneself as the medium through which they stated themselves. The context of a general philosophy, a general view of history, a religion, within which terrifying statements could be made, was abandoned, as was even that of a satisfactory technique. For if art is nothing but the expression of the subconscious through the medium of a personality, who knows whether the subconscious can draw, or scan, or write in metre?

Cecil Collins is not a surrealist, though he seems to have passed over the threshold of surrealism into his own world of curious poetic imagery. This world, although it obviously owes much to the influence of Picasso, is peculiarly his own. It is a world of romantic poetry experienced by a mind sensitive to psychology and literature. The stars, mountains, trees, beautiful faces appearing suddenly in the air, rivers, moons, all the images of romantic poetry are combined into patterns which are themselves dream-like poems. In the composition of these pictures, significant images are usually isolated from each other, and distortion seems sometimes to be introduced in order to isolate





CECIL COLLINS. *The Pilgrim Fool*. Oil. 1943



CECIL COLLINS. The Sleeping Fool. Oil 1943

the images. For example, the distorted perspective of the table in the *Portrait of The Artist and his Wife*, makes the spectator consider each object on the table separately. In the background through the window of the same picture, one is aware of the significance of various isolated objects, such as the greenhouse, the swans on the pond, the hill, the flowers in the garden.

The landscapes in Collins' pictures are almost naïvely humanized, or perhaps I should say feminized, because the natural scenery, flowers, breast-like mountains and hills, thick foliage, nearly always suggests the feminine. There is an obvious connection between the portrait of the artist's wife and the women in all Collins' pictures, indeed even a connection with some of his landscapes.

Collins has painted pictures which fall into several groups. There are the landscapes with mysterious stars, clouds, faces appearing in the sky, which remind one of trance-paintings, such as *The Messenger*. There is a series of paintings of figures in rooms, together with properties, such as a table with objects on it. The pictures of big-headed women with no backs to their heads and floating features, obviously owe something to Picasso's *Guernica* period, but the influence has been completely assimilated, and whether or not one likes them, they are as much Collins' own as anything else he has painted.

Probably the most striking and successful series is that of Fools. The Fool is a literary symbol which obviously has the greatest significance to Collins, and in these pictures it is evident that he is not only an original poetic painter, but also a traditionalist who has lived deeply into part of the English tradition. The fool is the symbol of a completely felt human emotion by someone indifferent to social appearances. The fool becomes completely that which he feels, and approximates to Keats's idea of poetic being: of the poet becoming that which he sees and which his senses experience.

In his series of paintings of fools, Collins certainly illuminates this idea, and he does so within an historic setting. Evidently his own deepest sympathy lies with the fool; what is more remarkable is that he has such a clear idea of the fool in relation to history and life. The fool is sometimes timeless, sometimes he suggests the Elizabethan fool of Shakespeare, sometimes the Carolingian fool of the Restoration stage, sometimes the modern

fool holding the hand of a child, while a city burns in the distance. The fool is a figure of wisdom, passion, dandyism (in Baudelaire's sense of the word), sensuousness; and sometimes he has perverse and unnatural qualities.

Within its limits, Collins has created a genuine poetic world of his own. It is not great poetry, and it does not burn with the consistent heat of Blake, or of Samuel Palmer at his best. But it is surely in the English romantic tradition, and for this reason to be welcomed.

It may be useful to end with some remarks sent to me by Collins on his attitude to his work:

'The time has come,' he writes to me, 'when the people of the world, artists and poets in particular, should turn a sceptical eye upon the dried-up, superficial stereotyped actualities of the third-rate journalist scientist, and on the barbaric vulgarity of politicians who have divorced politics from philosophy; politicians, under whose dictatorships a large portion of modern society lives.

'Painting is the communicating of revelation by visual poetry.

'The purpose of art is not to reform the world, but to transform it by poetic emotion, and the purpose of poetic emotion is to magnetize all things into recognizing life by poetic experience.'

The above sentence is so obscure that perhaps I should attempt to elucidate it. I suppose Collins means that poetic emotion fixes with magnetic force on those things which are the objects of a poet's experience, so that the poet, and through him also the reader, is able to recognize the true nature of existence in the magnified vision of such a natural object. Collins' general criticism of politicians is that they pursue their policies without troubling to understand the nature of existence, which is, after all, something to which philosophers, artists and religious thinkers, ignored by politicians, devote their attention:

'Our time is the crucifixion of poetry and painting by the vast brutal machine of modern existence.' By 'existence' he presumably means 'the conditions within which we endeavour to exist'.

'Painting creates not only the abstract beauty of form and colour relationships, but also the created phenomena of visual poetry.

'All real art transcends the image of its creation, because it transforms it.



'The poetic image in painting is a living visual presence that enters the being of the spectator like a seed, and there generates other images, and reveals each one with its special intrinsic reality. This eternal begetting in the being of the spectator is an extension of the communion of life, which in painting is created by contemplating the visual poetry of the painted image.

'The sky of our generation has been lit from the beginning of childhood by the light of the apocalypse, always before our eyes have ridden the four horsemen. Such a light therefore is the light in my pictures.'

The point of view expressed in these notes is that of many young writers and painters. The question of the position of art and artists in modern society is bound to preoccupy their minds. Whether artists believe that their art is revelation, the maintenance of tradition, or revolution, may largely be an argument about words, for once one agrees that art has some kind of transforming effect on the minds of an audience, and that this effect transcends social expediency, then the social labels which we give to artists are only comparative terms. The really important symptom is that artists and critics alike seem to have abandoned the idea of 'significant form'—surely one of the silliest and most sterile theories of art recently put forward.

NORMAN COHN

## GÉRARD DE NERVAL

...l'épanchement du songe dans la vie réelle...

—*Aurélia*

GÉRARD DE NERVAL had a versatile, charming talent and for a century it has almost wholly obscured his anguished and enigmatic genius. He published his first poems at eighteen, when he was still at the Collège Charlemagne, and he was regarded by teachers and pupils—among them Théophile Gautier—as a prodigy. At nineteen he produced his translation of *Faust*. Goethe wrote to him from Weimar: 'Je ne me suis jamais si bien compris qu'en vous lisant.' Throughout his life he could publish as he chose, Press and theatre were at his disposal. Gautier, Jules Janin, Arsène Houssaye were his admiring friends, they regarded a

visit from him as an honour. Even Hugo would receive a young and unknown writer if Nerval introduced him. When he travelled abroad the most exclusive salons competed to entertain him. During his periods of insanity his friends cared for him and paid for his treatment. After he hanged himself in the rue de la Vieille-Lanterne the street became a place of pilgrimage for literary and artistic Paris, and was specially drawn by Gustave Doré.

It was a dangerous type and degree of fame. Given an even greater reputation in his lifetime, a prodigious reputation like that of Hugo or Lamartine, Nerval would today be respected if not read. If he had been much less recognized, a lost expatriate or eccentric like Rimbaud or Lautréamont, he might have been discovered posthumously. As it is he is almost ignored. Gautier referred to him as 'ce pur et charmant écrivain qui à l'esprit le plus ingénieux, au caprice le plus tendre, joignait une forme sobre, délicate et parfaite', and posterity has underlined the uninspiring verdict. Gautier prophesied that *Sylvie* would come to be ranked with *Paul et Virginie* and the *Chaumière indienne* as a 'mélange heureux de rêverie et de sensibilité', and today it is accepted as a very minor classic. For the present-day reader, *Sylvie* has the faded, almost antiquarian charm of a bridal dress folded carefully away a hundred years ago; *Les Nuits d'Octobre* have the interest of good nineteenth-century prints of Paris life; *La Main Enchantée* is an effective piece of macabre fantasy, but it pales beside Hoffmann—whom Nerval had studied; *Le Voyage en Orient* is too long to read even as first-class reportage. Yet these are the works which made his reputation, and it is chiefly by these that he is remembered. They are the products of his talent, and they are just sufficiently imposing to overshadow the two short works—*Les Chimères* and *Aurélia*—which reveal the unwilling compulsive originality of vision which is genius.

The sonnets of *Les Chimères*—*El Desdichado*, *Myrtho*, *Horus*, *Antéros*, *Delfica*, *Artémis*; to a lesser degree *Le Christ aux Oliviers*—and the eighty pages of *Aurélia* are the achievements of an innovator as audacious as Hölderlin or Lautréamont. Nerval's audacity is less sustained, his genius consists in spasmodic, almost accidental surpassings of his habitual capacities; but in these works he is so genuine a precursor that he appears a portent. When they were written he was an isolated representative—or incarnation—of a

new type of sensibility, a new way of receiving, handling and communicating experience. Barely supported by the understanding of any of his contemporaries, he became the explorer and exploiter of psychic regions of unsuspected richness. He returned with maps, sketches, fragments of landscape, hints and warnings. For him *Les Chimères* and *Aurélia* were both the records of a journey and a traveller's guide. Gautier found the sonnets 'd'une mystère à faire trouver Orphée ou Lycophron limpides'. Gautier was as sensitive a critic as any alive today. The limitations of his understanding indicate no lack of individual intelligence, they are set by the range of experience familiar to his age. Nerval went far beyond that range. For full appreciation he had, perhaps, to wait for a generation which willy-nilly had passed through and beyond Freud and Surrealism—and which was still confronted by some at least of his own obsessive problems.

*Aurélia* and *Les Chimères* are the products of a deeply psychopathic personality. In a sense the same might of course be said of much of the greatest imaginative literature, certainly in modern Europe. But in most such cases psychopathic experience is valuable chiefly as a prerequisite of creation: reinforcing and canalizing the creative impulse, emphasizing attitudes, posing problems and dictating themes, heightening the sensitiveness which is the native endowment of the potential artist. The neurotic writer compromises with his abnormality. In the finished work the psychopathic pattern is overlaid by an elaborate structure of conscious and rational thought, its more outrageous eccentricities are toned down, its points of contact with 'normal' living are stressed; it has been made socially acceptable. With Nerval the psychopathic experience embraces the act of creation itself, it is of the very texture of his greatest writing, pervading each image, shaping each twist and turn of thought and feeling. For him no compromise was necessary or even possible. The neurotic is aware of society and its judgements, the madman is not. *Aurélia* is the detailed account of an outbreak of certifiable (and certified) insanity, from which Nerval never completely recovered; the unfinished last pages were found on his body. *Les Chimères* were actually composed in a state of madness. It was of this period that Gautier wrote: 'Pendant de longues heures nous avons écouté le poète transformé en voyant qui nous déroulait de merveilleuses apocalypses et décrivait, avec une éloquence qui ne se retrouvera

plus, des visions supérieures en éclat aux magies orientales du hatchich.' *Les Chimères* and *Aurélia* are no mere eruptions of madness, they are subtle and complex works of art; high intelligence and a fastidious craftsmanship have gone to shape them; but what impresses and astonishes is, certainly, the direct access to the Unconscious, the ease with which Nerval draws upon the most obscure resources of the mind. They are poetic triumphs of a very special kind, which could perhaps be attained—at least in the mid-nineteenth century—only at the price of psychosis. His genius is a function of his madness.

Yet this madness was no unforeseen catastrophe, it was itself—as those who knew him realized—a consummation. It was the fate which, half consciously, he had prepared for himself for many years. The outbreaks of insanity brought unknown richness of experience, a tremendous access of creative power, but they implied no violent break in the continuity of his mental life. In the hallucinatory world which opened up to Nerval, his obsessions took on the form of visual symbols, but they were still the same obsessions as had haunted him year after year while he moved, gracious, witty, courted, through the capitals of Europe and Asia. The pattern of his spasmodic psychosis is a distorted but still recognizable reflection of the enduring pattern of his life. In his autobiographical writings—and the bulk of his work is at least semi-autobiographical—Nerval himself has told the story of this pattern, how it was first laid down and later developed and endlessly elaborated. It is an account in which external events are often suppressed or modified, but from which it is still possible to reconstruct his spiritual development. It is only in the light of this personal history that the private symbolism of *Les Chimères* and *Aurélia* can be adequately interpreted—and can be seen, paradoxically, to have more than a private significance.

Nerval was the son of an Army doctor (his real name was Labrunie) and of a Parisian shop-girl. His mother accompanied her husband in the campaigns of the Grande Armée and died in Silesia; his father remained with the Army. The boy was left until the age of seven in the care of a great-uncle. He grew up at Montigny, near Ermenonville; the idyllic countryside of Valois, with its forests, lakes and romantic ruins, its 'légendes étranges et . . . superstitions bizarres', held him charmed and



captive throughout his life. Nerval was—like Hölderlin, Nietzsche and Rimbaud—in effect a fatherless child, whose personality was formed almost wholly under the influence of women. In later life he developed a warm affection for his father, but as a child he seems to have found no man from whom he could assimilate an outlook and a code. The great-uncle, a collector of Roman and Celtic remains, instilled into the boy a veneration for the gods of antiquity—‘surtout la bonne grosse figure barbue d’un dieu Pan souriant à l’entrée d’une grotte’—but he was unable to give him any coherent religious faith. His ideas, according to Nerval, fluctuated between Christian doctrine, eighteenth-century scepticism, and the popular superstitions of the region. ‘Embarassé au milieu de ces divers symboles, je demandai un jour à mon oncle ce que c’était que Dieu. “Dieu, c’est le soleil,” me dit-il.’ Meanwhile the boy attended the local church and was vaguely instructed in Christian dogma by an aunt; but he never became a consciously believing Christian. Yet his was a deeply idealistic temperament, his need for a faith was an insistent hunger. He found himself faced with the task of creating the structure of a creed out of his own resources of thought, feeling, and experience. As a child Nerval was already committed to a search after strange gods. It ended only with his life.

His companions were girls and young women, the cousins, servants, village girls, Héloïse, Fanchette, Sylvie, Adrienne, who pass and repass, in an aura of nostalgic memories, through *Sylvie* and the *Promenades et Souvenirs*, and who reappear in the mysterious lost Goddess of Nature of *Aurélia*. They were the loves of his childhood and adolescence, and he never outgrew their power. Nerval himself perceived, with remarkable insight, that all his life he was trying to recapture these first loves—or rather this one first love, for in his mind all were fused into a single ideal being. The women he met later were important to him only to the extent to which they could evoke the idyll of his childhood. *Sylvie* opens with the discovery that a passion which had driven him to visit one theatre night after night for a whole year, existed only because the actress Aurélie (in real life Jenny Colon) reminded him of Adrienne. He himself ascribed this unending quest for a lost love to an incident in his early adolescence. When he first saw Adrienne she was a girl dancing and singing in the moonlight on the lawn before an ancient castle:

'On nous dit de nous embrasser . . . En lui donnant ce baiser, je ne pus m'empêcher de lui presser la main. Les longs anneaux roulés de ses cheveux d'or effleuraient mes joues. De ce moment, un trouble inconnu s'empara de moi . . . 'Cet amour vague et sans espoir . . . avait son germe dans le souvenir d'Adrienne, fleur de la nuit éclose à la pâle clarté de la lune, fantôme rose et blond glissant sur l'herbe verte à demi baignée de blanches vapeurs.'

Nerval built a whole myth around the figure of Adrienne. He chose to think of the girl who in real life was the daughter of the Duc de Bourbon and who married the Baron de Feuchères, as a nun who had died in a convent within a few miles of his childhood home. He never ceased to mourn her imaginary death. But behind Adrienne are other figures, girls and women remembered perhaps from early childhood, the mother he had never known and whose image always haunted him. Nerval made Adrienne the symbol of all the loves of his childhood and youth. She was chosen to be the central figure in a pattern which was already set.

In Nerval's mind the religious and the sexual are intermingled so deeply as to be indistinguishable. The search after strange gods, the quest for the lost love were one single journey, a lifelong pilgrimage towards a non-existent shrine. It was a compulsion which drove him across Europe and into Asia, which forbade him to live more than a few days in the same house, which, when he was already middle-aged, in the streets of Paris, 'semblait l'enlever de terre comme la Madelaine dans sa Baume, ou le faisait courir à ras du sol, agitant ses bras comme les ailes.' The figure which beckoned him was infinitely protean, it was the German Lorelei and the antique Isis of Egypt and Pompeii, it was a third-rate actress in a Paris theatre and a young Englishwoman eating lemons on a boat at Naples. And always it eluded him. Nerval may have had liaisons with living women—he was so reticent that even Gautier never knew—but the gulf between reality and his ideal was in any case ineluctable. His was a desire which could be realized only in the limitless wish-fulfilment of madness. The happiest moment in Nerval's life was perhaps the moment described in *Aurélia*: ' . . . La divinité de mes rêves m'apparut souriante . . . les près verdissaient, les fleurs et les feuillages s'élevaient de terre sur la trace de ses pas.' On the wall of his

asylum cell he wrote: 'Tu m'as visité cette nuit.' This close association of religious and erotic experiences is characteristic of schizophrenia; Nerval's sexual mysticism implies the psychosis which destroyed him. This is of course no condemnation. Like some of the great Catholic writers of earlier centuries, he was able to convert a private schizophrenic fantasy into art of enduring value.

The loved woman belonged to the past and to the future, she was both a memory and a hope. Inevitably the strange gods were conceived as powers who had once ruled on earth and who had been deposed; now, he believed, the term of their exile was at hand, the time was ripe for them to redeem their heritage. Nerval projected the pattern of his own inner life on to the universe. Human history was for him a curve which was striving to rejoin its point of origin. For the myth of progress he substituted a strange version of the myth of rebirth:

'Ils reviendront ces dieux que tu pleures toujours!  
Le temps va ramener l'ordre des anciens jours  
La terre a tréssailli d'un souffle prophétique.'

Irresistibly one is reminded of Nietzsche's myth of Dionysos and the 'ewigen Wiederkehr', of the 'dark gods' of Lawrence, of Hölderlin's vision:

'Stumm ist der delphische Gott . . .  
Aber droben das Licht, es spricht noch heute zu Menschen,  
Schöner Deutungen voll, und des grossen Donnerers Stimme  
Ruft es: denket ihr mein? . . .

. . . wenn unser

Herbst kommt, wenn ihr, gereift, ihr Geister alle der Vorwelt!  
Dann erhalte das Fest auch euch, vergangene Tage! . . .'

The parallelism is striking. The experience of life embalmed in *Les Chimères* and in *Aurélia* is a highly personal one, yet from a century's distance it can be seen to have its natural place in the shifting pattern of European culture. No writer, however original, ever represents himself alone. Fortuitous circumstances of upbringing and childhood experience, an exceptional endowment of sensitiveness or intelligence, can give an individual twist to the complex process of moulding by which a culture imposes itself upon its members. The twist is often decisive, the results can be startling; but the process of social conditioning itself is

inescapable. The most aberrant individual—rebel, neurotic, madman—is still the creature of his age. Writers like Nerval, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, who were doomed to madness, or Lawrence who was doomed to ostracism and exile, still bear witness to the culture which bore them. Retrospectively one can see that their experience reflected—obliquely—conflicts which were inherent in those cultures. The myths which they created crystallized problems which were perceived by many, but which few could formulate. They were problems which would have been incomprehensible before, at the earliest, the mid-eighteenth century. Rousseau, the idol of Nerval as well as of Hölderlin, was probably the first European writer who was vaguely aware of their emergence.

Nerval himself has described the preoccupations and attitudes of his colleagues, the second generation of the French Romantics, whose headquarters in the impasse du Doyenné was called by Houssaye 'la mère patrie de toutes les Bohèmes':

'Nous vivions alors dans une époque étrange . . . c'était un mélange d'activité, d'hésitation et de paresse, d'utopies brillantes, d'aspirations philosophiques ou religieuses, d'enthousiasmes vagues, mêlés de certains instincts de renaissance, d'ennuis des discordes passées, d'espoirs incertains . . . nous étions ivres de poésie et d'amour. Amour, hélas! des formes vagues, des teintes roses et bleues, des fantômes métaphysiques! Vue de près, la femme réelle révoltait notre ingénuité; il fallut qu'elle apparût reine ou déesse, et surtout n'en pas approcher.'

If Nerval's greatest work was barely understood by his contemporaries it was less, one suspects, because of the nature of his conflicts than because of their intensity. It was not everyone, not even every poet of the Bohème, who could appreciate the demonic impulse which had been generated among the gentle landscapes of Valois, and which was to find its logical fulfilment on a spiral staircase in the Paris slums. What in many other romantic poets was a vague *malaise* was in him an agony.

Nerval had the exorbitant conscience of a saint, but it was dissociated from conscious belief in any traditional religious doctrine, he recognized as ineradicable 'une certaine irrésolution unie chez moi à l'esprit le plus réligieux'. And in this again his experience represented, as though in caricature, the experience of a generation. France was already caught up in a process of



transformation which must have appeared horrifyingly radical and swift. New economic techniques were appearing, social relationships were changing, traditional beliefs were disintegrating into a welter of competing myths. Nerval saw in his 'irrésolution' the image of a society in which certainty was being replaced by doubt, an age 'de révolutions et d'orages, où toutes les croyances ont été brisées.' He was, he said, 'enfant d'un siècle sceptique plutôt qu'incrédule, flottant entre deux éducations contraires, celle de la Révolution, qui niait tout, et celle de la réaction sociale, qui prétend ramener l'ensemble des croyances chrétiennes.' Nerval had his phase of political radicalism, the period of the *Elégies nationales et Satires politiques*, but it was soon over. For him the Revolution was symbolized in the railways cutting across his beloved Valois, brutally disrupting the natural contours, the ancient routes, the traditional ways of life. He saw with anguish 'ces pauvres villes délaissées dont les chemins de fer ont détourné la circulation et la vie. Elles se concentrent en elles-mêmes jetant un regard desabusé sur les merveilles d'une civilisation qui les condamne ou les oublie . . . ces cercles du purgatoire de Dante immobilisés dans un seul souvenir, et où se refont dans un centre plus étroit les actes de la vie passée.' In these towns he saw his own image. The Revolution was destroying all that he most valued and so he repudiated it. It was not science that would 'faire jaillir du désordre et des ruines la cité merveilleuse de l'avenir. . . . Ce sont des blasphèmes. . . . O science! ô vanité!'

But 'science' had done its work, there was now no universally-accepted mythology, no general idiom into which he could translate his private conflicts. Rousseau, however heretically, had still been able to press the traditional doctrines of Christianity into the service of his own religious experience; for Nerval this was no longer a matter-of-course. 'Je frémis en songeant quel chrétien je ferais . . . ' But this solution was not open to him. 'Ainsi périssait', he cried in *Isis*, 'sous l'effort de la raison moderne, le Christ lui-même.' The absence of religious faith meant for him a sense of utter emptiness, the fearful experience which in *Le Christ aux Oliviers* he attributes to Christ himself:

'En cherchant l'œil de Dieu, je n'ai vu qu'un orbite  
Vaste, noir et sans fond, d'où la nuit qui l'habite  
Rayonne sur le monde et s'épaissit toujours . . . '

The loss of God is the death of the universe:

‘Hélas! et si je meurs, c’est que tout va mourir.’

In *Aurélia* Nerval describes how, in one of his fits of madness, he believed that the end of the world was at hand: ‘Je croyais voir un soleil noir dans le ciel désert et un globe rouge de sang au-dessus des Tuileries. Je me dis: “La nuit éternelle commence, et elle va être terrible. Que va-t-il arriver quand les hommes s’apercevront qu’il n’y a plus de soleil? . . . Des voix enfantines répétaient en chœur: “*Christe! Christe! Christe!* . . .” Mais le Christ n’est plus! me disais-je; ils ne le savent pas encore!’ In *Isis* he recalls the last days of the Roman Empire, as described by Apuleius. In that epoch too all beliefs and values had been called in question, God had seemed to be lost. The answer then had been to resurrect the gods of bygone cultures, the Egyptian Isis had been worshipped at Pompeii. A similar solution was, perhaps, open to his own generation: ‘. . . me verrai-je entraîné à tout croire, comme nos pères les philosophes l’avaient été à tout nier? . . . Si la chute successive des croyances conduisait à ce résultat, ne serait-il pas plus consolant de tomber dans l’excès contrainte et s’essayer de se reprendre aux illusions du passé?’

Nerval inherited from the Age of Enlightenment a belief in the possibility of a ‘universal religion’. Like Lessing he dabbled in free-masonry; he even persuaded a Mohammedan, whose daughter he thought of marrying, that religious differences could be no obstacle, as they were non-existent. And like the anthropologists of a later day he was impressed by the similarities in the mythological structures of the religions he studied. These similarities he regarded not as disproving the ‘truth’ of any one religion, but as proving that all were essentially true. Men, he believed, had once known ‘the truth’. The record of that knowledge was still there, embalmed in religious doctrines, in myths, even in folklore. But in time the record had become distorted: ‘L’alphabet magique, l’hiéroglyphe mystérieux ne nous arrivent qu’incomplets et faussés . . . retrouvons la lettre perdue ou le signe effacé, recomposons la gamme dissonante. . . .’

The age encouraged him in his enterprise. Instead of a universal myth it offered a profusion of esoteric cults, a multitude of academic gleanings from remote or vanished cultures. There were the works of the eighteenth-century ‘Illuminés’ and of

Swedenborg, there were the newly-discovered funds of folklore. There was a certain common heritage of Classical and Biblical learning. For Nerval there were travels in Germany and Austria and Holland, in Egypt and Turkey. He drew upon all these sources. The result is the world which finds its fullest expression in *Les Chimères*. It is a strange flowing world in which the symbolic figures appear and fade, merge into one another like waves in water:

‘Suis-je Amour où Phebus, Lusignan où Biron?’

The Greek Gods, the legendary lover of Valois, the soldier-scholar at the court of Marguerite de Navarre, are one, just as elsewhere the Egyptian Kneph and the Hebrew Jehovah are interchangeable, and Isis is the goddess of love, and at the same time the lost loves of Nerval's childhood, the lost mother of his infancy, the mother of mankind, the Earth-mother, the Mother of God. Every symbol has many meanings. The ‘seule étoile’ of *El Desdichado* is the ‘seule étoile’ of *Sylvie*—‘tour à tour bleue et rose comme l'astre trompeur d'Aldébaran, c'était Adrienne où Sylvie—c'étaient les deux moitiés d'un seul amour...’ and it is the star at sight of which he stood in the streets of Paris ‘les bras étendues, attendant le moment où l'âme allait se séparer du corps, attirée magnétiquement dans le rayon de l'étoile’—and again it is Isis. One reads:

‘Dans la nuit du tombeau, toi qui m'as consolé,  
Rends-moi le Pausilippe et la mer d'Italie,  
La fleur qui plaisait tant à mon coeur désolé. . . .’

—and one is moved by the sincerity and simplicity of the cry, there is no need to know anything of Nerval in order to feel its power. Yet these lines are fraught with the memories of a lifetime: memories of the Isis of Pompeii, of Octavie, the young Englishwoman with whom he visited the temple of Isis—and who is herself the Dafné of the ‘citron amers’, the Dafné of *Delfica*—of Sylvie walking among the blue periwinkles of Valois, ‘les pervanches si chères à Rousseau’, which in turn are the mystic forget-me-not of *Aurélia*: ‘Sur les montagnes de l'Himalaya une petite fleur est née—Ne m'oubliez pas! Le regard chatoyant d'une étoile s'est fixé un instant sur elle, et une réponse s'est fait entendre dans un doux langage étranger—*Myosotis!*’—From each image in these sonnets associations radiate in tenuous strands,

linking image to image, sonnet to sonnet, in a close-woven network. Each line, almost, implies all the others, and in turn draws its meanings from them. It is an impressive experience to follow the strands through, to see how they meet, twine together and diverge, and then to stand away and to consider the work again as a whole. The final pattern is perfectly harmonious and appears extremely simple.

In this private universe traditional Christian symbolism still plays a part, and it is a very curious one. For all his intellectual doubts Nerval's habits of thought and feeling were deeply conditioned by Christian teaching. The Christian doctrine of sexual sin, of divine punishment, damnation and redemption, proved to be an inalienable inheritance. Though it could be forced into the most personal and heretical disguises, no amount of conscious scepticism could exorcize its power. Christianity was to him more than a body of doctrine whose objective 'truth' might be doubted; it stood above all for definite moral values which he alternately accepted and denied. Nerval, torn between the claims of an overwhelming sexual impulse and the claims of an intransigent conscience, translated the conflict into religious terms. Social restrictions on sexual activity, and above all their magnified reflections in the dictates of his own conscience, were identified by him—more whole-heartedly even than by most—with the voice of God. Morality expressed itself in a specifically religious sense of sin. Nerval was obsessed by guilt: guilt before woman, guilt before God: ' . . . je ne suis pas digne de m'agenouiller sur la tombe d'une chrétienne; n'ajoutons pas une profanation à tant d'autres. . . . ' His whole life was an effort to achieve a compromise between his sexuality and the power within him that condemned it. The structure of his schizophrenia, his sexual mysticism itself was dictated by this need. The creation of a divinity who should symbolize both love and virginity, the lover's quest which was at the same time an ascetic refuge, represent his attempt to win equilibrium from the very clash of these opposing forces. The synthesis was a triumph of imaginative construction, but it was always precarious. Nerval's attitude remained ambivalent through and through, he alternately assented in and rebelled against both sides of his divided nature. *Aurélia* and *Les Chimères* are in this respect complementary to one another, they mark the two outermost points of his experience.



*Aurélia* is the more approachable work; though it was written later, it is an invaluable introduction to the sonnets. *Aurélia* is essentially an assent in conscience, in what Nerval conceived as the Christian God. It is the record of a revelation, almost of a conversion. Its culmination is the apocalyptic moment in which Nerval achieves a reconciliation with Christ which is at the same time a reconciliation with his beloved, a reconciliation, even, with the enemies of Christ, the pagan gods of antiquity:

‘Je reconnus les traits divins de . . . Nous volions au triomphe, et nos ennemis étaient à nos pieds. La huppe messagère nous guidait au plus haut des cieux, et l’arc de lumière éclatait dans les mains divins d’Apollon. Le cor enchanté d’Adonis résonnait à travers les bois.

‘O mort! où est la victoire, puisque le Messie vainqueur chevauchait entre nous deux? Sa robe était d’hyacinthe soufrée, et ses poignets, ainsi que les chevilles de ses pieds, étincelaient de diamants et de rubis. Quand sa houssine légère toucha la porte de nacre de la Jérusalem nouvelle, nous fûmes tous les trois inondés de lumière. C’est alors que je suis descendu parmi les hommes pour leur annoncer l’heureuse nouvelle.

‘Je sors d’un rêve bien doux: j’ai revu celle que j’avais aimée transfigurée et radieuse. Le ciel s’est ouvert dans toute sa gloire, et j’y ai lu le mot *pardon* signé du sang de Jésus-Christe.

‘Une étoile a brillé tout à coup et m’a révélé le secret du monde des mondes. Hosannah! paix à la terre et gloire aux cieux!’

It is the final renunciation of the flesh, the complete transmutation of sexual desire into religious adoration. Nerval never retreated from this point. He described his vision and within a few days, perhaps within a few hours, he had taken his life.

Compared with *Aurélia*, *Les Chimères* are ‘difficult’. Gautier regarded them as impenetrably obscure, and this judgement seems to have persisted to the present day; a note to a recent edition explains, apologetically, that these products of a deranged mind must remain largely unintelligible. It would be truer to say that the value of these sonnets depends only to a small extent on their underlying ideas, that their ‘sense’ is the least important element in their meaning. Their poetic appeal is so subtle and compelling, their rhythm so haunting, their imagery so indefinitely evocative that the reader is tempted to leave unexplored any intellectual content they may have. Nevertheless in writing them

Nerval was attempting to convey a 'message'. Indirectly, as though from a multitude of tiny hints or from an elaborate code, there emerges an attitude—almost a doctrine—which for him was perhaps as specific as that of *Aurélia*.

*Les Chimères* are the obverse of *Aurélia*, they are the protest of the outraged instincts. There is no attempt here at reconciliation, the cunning unremitting struggle between desire and prohibition is laid bare. It is the traditional Christian dichotomy of flesh and spirit, but seen from a new angle. Nerval appears as the champion of the anarchic life of impulse against the forces of order and restraint. The mythological terms are the same as in *Aurélia*, but they serve another purpose. The gods to whom Nerval appeals, with whom at times he identifies himself, are the Gods who, as he explains in *Cagliostro*, had been expelled from the earth on the advent of Christ, and whose land of exile was in the stars. They are dangerous and rebellious beings, they are not only pre-Christian but anti-Christian:

'Jéhovah! le dernier, vaincu par ton génie,  
Qui, du fond des enfers, criait: "O tyrannie!"  
C'est mon aïeul Bélus ou mon père Dagon. . . .

Ils m'ont plongé trois fois dans les eaux de Cocyte,  
Et protégeant tout seul ma mère Amalécyte,  
Je ressème à ses pieds les dents du vieux dragon.'

—*Antéros*.

Jehovah is the symbol of repression and punishment. And although he is essentially the jealous God of the Old Testament, Nerval regards him as still dominant, he is 'le dieu vainqueur' whose authority is perpetuated in the teachings of Christianity. The poet here is the enemy of the 'religion redoutable', he sees himself as the heir of Dagon and Baal, the pagan gods whom Jehovah ousted, he is of the race of Amalek, who warred against the Chosen People and whose memory was ordained to be blotted out from under Heaven.

*Antéros* is the least effective of the sonnets, the only one in which Nerval indulges in Romantic pathos. In *Horus* the poet as an individual plays no rôle, the same theme is treated in terms of the history of the universe. The reign of Kneph, the deformed Lord of the Universe, 'le roi des hivers', draws to its close. A new god is born, the god of light and sunshine, the Egyptian

counterpart of the Greek Apollo. Isis who was the unwilling spouse of Kneph turns with joy to the new age, she herself takes on the attributes of the goddesses of fertility and love:

‘L’aigle a déjà passé, l’esprit nouveau m’appelle,  
J’ai revêtu pour lui la robe de Cybèle . . .

La Déesse avait fui sur sa conque dorée,  
La mer nous renvoyait son image adorée,  
Et les cieux rayonnaient sous l’écharpe d’Isis.’

The mention of Cybèle recalls the description of Christ in *Le Christ aux Oliviers*:

‘Ce Phaéton perdu sous la foudre des dieux  
Ce bel Atys meurtri que Cybèle ranime!’

The birth of *Horus* is the birth of Christ, and it is the beginning of the age of love and sunshine. Here Nerval distinguishes between the gods of the Old and New Testaments, but Christ himself has become a pagan god, the champion of the innocence of instinctual life.

The symbolism of *El Desdichado* and of *Artémis* is less conscious and systematic, the approach, though subtler than in *Antéros*, is again overtly personal; Nerval is once more the human lover seeking, among the fluid landscapes of memory, dreams and madness, the woman he has lost. Yet even here there is a haunted awareness of dualism:

‘Et j’ai deux fois vainqueur traversé l’Achéron:  
Modulant tour à tour sur la lyre d’Orphée  
Les soupirs de la sainte et les cris de la fée.’

And in *Artémis* he repudiates the saint, he rejects the Heaven of the spirit:

‘Sainte Napolitaine aux mains pleines de feux,  
Rose au cœur violet, fleur de Sainte Gudule:  
As-tu trouvé ta croix dans le désert des cieux?  
  
Roses blanches, tombez! vous insultez nos dieux:  
Tombez, fantômes blancs, de votre ciel qui brûle:  
—La sainte de l’abîme est plus sainte à mes yeux!’

But it is in *Myrtho* and above all in the uniquely lovely *Delfica* that the vision of the lost world of paganism finds its subtlest and most mature expression. Here Nerval turns for the realization

of his ideal to pre-Socratic Greece. As in the vision of Hölderlin, the forgotten gods of innocence hover above the burning scattered islands, among the laurels and the olive-trees. The primeval force which will redeem the world lies bound in the dumb volcanoes and in the silence of the Delphic priestess. The poet cries to Myrtho, the 'divine enchanteresse' who is at once the goddess of the Greek island and a personification of the sacred myrtle of Aphrodite:

'Je sais pourquoi là-bas le volcan s'est rouvert . . .  
C'est qu'hier tu l'avois touché d'un pied agile,  
Et de cendres soudain l'horizon s'est couvert.

Depuis qu'un duc normand brisa tes dieux d'argile  
Toujours, sous les rameaux du laurier de virgile,  
Le pâle Hortensia s'unit au Myrthe vert!'

The absence of the pagan gods is the sleep of the Dionysian life, it is the triumph of order, authority, ascetic restraint:

'Cependant la sibylle au visage latin  
Est endormie encor sous l'arc de Constantin:  
—Et rien n'a dérangé le sévère portique.'

These are the poems of an exile, of a poet 'fils de la Grèce' born into the age of Constantine, the great administrator, the creator of the massive structure of Church and State, the sacrilegious king who stole the tripod from Delphi and set it before a Christian altar. In foretelling the birth of Christ the last of the inspired prophetesses had announced the age-long suppression of the instinctual life. With astonishing concentration of meaning these two sonnets present both Nerval's interpretation of the world that is and his vision of a world that was and which in the fulness of time, he believed, would be again.

Nerval has achieved here a relationship to his theme which was beyond the powers of the earlier Romantics and which is seldom found even in Baudelaire. With the exception of *Antéros*, *Les Chimères* contain no hint of pose. In these creations of the most subjective of writers one is scarcely aware of the poet as a protagonist or even as a personality. And here again it is the extremeness of Nerval's abnormality that is his salvation. The Romantics were, almost by definition, neurotics. And in the self-dramatization of the neurotic there is an *arrière-pensée*, a



glance at the audience, an awareness of the rôle to be played. Nerval himself in his lesser works, and even sometimes in *Aurélia*, slips into pose; *Sylvie* does not survive the test of irony. But the mad Nerval transcends this weakness. When he identifies himself with the gods of antiquity or with Christ himself he is not playing a part, he is affirming what was to him a spiritual reality. His subjectivity is so enormous that it embraces and transmutes the world, destroys it and builds it again in his own image. The poet needs no 'cosmic background' because he has absorbed the universe; his personality is effaced because he is no longer aware of anything outside it. By a tortuous route Nerval attains a strange effect of impersonality. Not only in the restraint and regularity of their versification, but in their seeming objectivity, *Myrtho*, *Horus* and *Delfica* at least are almost Classical.

Yet between Nerval and the writers of the seventeenth century there lies a gulf. The impulses which inspired him and the aims which he pursued were different from theirs. He could not, any more than any other nineteenth-century poet, draw on experience of such general and enduring validity, or interpret it with such lucidity and maturity of vision, as any one of the major Classical writers; and in innate genius, too, he stands far below the greatest of them. Yet he attained one thing which was beyond their reach, he was able, almost involuntarily, to develop one territory whose existence they would scarcely have been able to conceive.

'De loin en loin s'élevaient des massifs de peupliers, d'acacias et de pins, au sein desquels on entrevoyait des statues noircies par le temps. J'aperçus devant moi un entassement de rochers couverts de lierre d'où jaillissaient une source d'eau vive, dont le clapotement harmonieux résonnait sur un bassin d'eau dormante à demi voilée de larges feuilles de nénufar.

'La dame que je suivais, développant sa taille élancée dans un mouvement qui faisait miroiter les plis de sa robe en taffetas changeant, entoura gracieusement de son bras nu une longue tige de rose tremière, puis elle se mit à grandir sous un clair rayon de lumière, de telle sorte que peu à peu le jardin prenait sa forme, et les parterres et les arbres devenaient les rosaces et les festons de ses vêtements; tandis que sa figure et ses bras imprimaient leurs contours aux nuages pourprés du ciel. Je la perdais ainsi de vue à mesure qu'elle semblait s'évanouir dans sa propre

grandeur. "Oh! ne fuis pas! m'écriais-je... car la nature meurt avec toi!"

'Disant ces mots, je marchais péniblement à travers les ronces, comme pour saisir l'ombre agrandie qui m'échappait; mais je me heurtai à un pan de mur dégradé, au pied duquel gisait un buste de femme. En le relevant, j'eus la persuasion que c'était le *sien*... Je reconnus des traits chéris, et portant les yeux autour de moi, je vis que le jardin avait pris l'aspect d'un cimetière. Des voix disaient: "L'univers est dans la nuit".

This is Dali in words. There are many passages in *Aurélia* of similar quality—in some of them Nerval is as terrifying as Lautréamont—and they are in the most literal sense revolutionary. They mark an abrupt deflection in one of the major currents of literature, a new channel has been opened up to the creative impulse. In his more rational moments Nerval realized quite clearly that the use to which he was putting language was a new one, he has himself analysed the nature of his innovation: 'Je m'encourageais à une audacieuse tentative, je résolu de fixer le rêve et d'en connaître le secret'. The dream was for him the most intense form of spiritual life, it was a mystical experience: 'Le rêve est une seconde vie, je n'ai pu passer sans rémir ces portes d'ivoire ou de corne qui nous séparent du monde invisible... le Moi, sous une autre forme, continue l'œuvre de l'existence... le monde des Esprits s'ouvre pour nous'.

This was true above all of the waking dream of madness. In schizophrenia the economy of mind is altered, the relationship between consciousness and the Unconscious is revised. External objects are perceived as though for the first time, in a new and often strangely beautiful light. Nerval has described how it came to him, a subtle modification of the very texture of experience: '... tout dans la nature prenait des aspects nouveaux, et des voix secrètes sortaient de la plante, de l'arbre, des animaux, des plus humbles insectes, pour m'avertir et m'encourager... les objets sans forme et sans vie prêtaient eux-mêmes aux calculs de mon esprit; des combinaisons des cailloux, des figures et d'angles, des fentes et d'ouvertures, des découpures de feuilles, des couleurs, des odeurs et des sons je voyais ressortir des harmonies jusqu'alors inconnues'. The experience itself is an old one. In the most diverse cultures there have been men and women in whom the Unconscious has overflowed into the conscious mind,

who have rejected the world of 'common sense' in favour of a private world of visions. What was new was the manner in which Nerval treated this experience. Generally the visionary has been accepted—if at all—as the exponent and prophet of a traditional mythology, his experiences have been turned to the service of an existing religious cult. Nerval deliberately turned his psychopathic condition into a source of poetry. Out of the hallucinations of insanity he built a private religion, but he also built a new art.

And in this he foreshadowed what was to be perhaps the most original contribution of modern Europe to world literature. Nerval attained at the cost of his sanity something which has been achieved by later writers by other and less devastating means: the conscious exploitation of the least conscious levels of the mind. His account of the schizophrenic experience is more than a clinical description of remarkable acuteness. It indicates the nature of Nerval's genius and it defines—prophetically—the essential quality of much of the most remarkable European writing from Symbolism to Surrealism. Although his own greatest works are so slight in bulk, they rehearse the development of a literature. *Les Chimères*, where almost every word is a many-layered structure of associations, are already pure Symbolism. And all Surrealism is contained in embryo in the impossible, infallibly appealing landscapes of *Aurélia*. In these works the limitations and conquests of a new tradition of literature are already revealed: its esoterism, its remoteness from everyday life—but also the prodigious enrichment which it was to bring to language, a new potency of image and an unrivalled subtlety of rhythm.

*Les Chimères* and *Aurélia* mark the advent of a new type of Faith. It was not possible for Nerval, as it had been for the mediæval visionaries and even for Swedenborg and Blake, to believe at all times and without qualification in the mysterious world which at moments appeared to him. When his visions left him he recognized very clearly their subjective, even their psychopathic origin. Yet there was a sense in which he always believed in them. Fantasy was for him an integral part of reality: 'Je crois que l'imagination humaine n'a rien inventé qui ne soit vrai, dans ce monde ou dans les autres'. The visionary experience was indeed more real than anything else, it was the object and justification of living. Nerval was perhaps the first poet to see

in the hegemony of fantasy the supreme form of insight, to attribute to illusion, consciously recognized as such, the absolute value of a religious revelation. The last words he wrote are perhaps the most astonishing, they are the final comment not only on his own work but on the work of generations of writers who were still to be born:

'Telles sont les idées bizarres que donnent ces sortes de maladies . . . je pouvais juger le monde d'illusions où j'avais quelque temps vécu. Toutefois je me sens heureux des convictions que j'ai acquises, et je compare cette série d'épreuves que j'ai traversées à ce que, pour les anciens, représentait l'idée d'une descente aux enfers.'

---

## SELECTED NOTICES

*Water on the Steps.* By Peter de Polnay. (Secker & Warburg. 9s. 6d.)

*The Barricades.* By Philip Toynbee. (Putnam. 8s. 6d.)

*The Company She Keeps.* By Mary McCarthy. (Nicholson & Watson. 8s. 6d.)

*The Lost Traveller.* By Ruthven Todd. (Grey Walls Press. 7s. 6d.)

THIS is an exciting, uneven, sensitive, dubious, talented book. There is much emotionalism, a touch of the theatrical, a touch of the poetic, a touch of almost anything you can think of; all intensely vivid; a bit flippant, a bit phony; humorous, stimulating, picturesque.

The vitality of Peter de Polnay's writing assaults the reader with a violent and somewhat disintegrating impact. His intensity, his elaboration of detail, produce a vertiginous impression, like a sort of delirium. Like forms of a fever dream, or like the sleep-walker Mr. Kotaklian, one sees the characters moving about, with glasses or bombs or whatever it is in their hands, ironic or idealistic or tough words in their mouths, while the water laps symbolically the steps of the Réserve, and the lone old crustacean, the Grand Duke Nicolai, trembles and finally dies, unconverted into *langouste à l'Américaine*, in a corner of his blue pool.

The setting, the movement, the dramatic situations of the many-sided story hold the attention like an exciting film. There is perhaps a little too much of the impresario about Mr. de Polnay. Contemplating the sentiment of his book one feels confused and uncertain. All this high-minded faith and hope; this belief in England as the holy protagonist of freedom: surely there's something a bit unconvincing here, a little bit out of line? The story itself has its feet planted satisfactorily on the ground, but the ideology seems to be floating up round the ceiling—and a baroque painted ceiling at that.

Peter de Polnay is a satirist, an individualist, and a fascinatingly fluent writer; but on the high moral plane he seems a trifle out of his element, he doesn't quite get away with the starry-eyed stuff.

All the same, something moving and brave does emerge, something unusual and worth while; the working spectacle of a mind vehemently alive.



Philip Toynbee, too, is a satirist, but although much of *The Barricades* is written in flippant style and deals with destructive, frivolous, irresponsible people, it is essentially a much more serious book than *Water on the Steps*. Or rather, it's a book to be taken more seriously.

While Peter de Polnay's ethical integrity seems a little suspect, one never feels any doubt at all about Mr. Toynbee's sincerity. *The Barricades*, in spite of its unconventional hero and the dubious crew of drunks and neurotics with whom he becomes involved, hoists a pretty high moral standard. One might almost say that it's a book with a moral; though the exact nature of the moral is somewhat obscure. It lies, presumably, in the symbolic quality of the relationship between the schoolmaster Rawlins and his pupil Markham. Markham and Rawlins are like manifestations of the same person in different life-stages: in Markham we seem to be looking back into the youth of Rawlins himself.

Rawlins is sacked from the school for drunkenness but also because he is an individualist and a liberal. Markham runs away because of his fanatical longing to fight in the cause of freedom. Both of them are rebels against the wicked stupidity of collective society as manifested in the educational system; the rebellion in each case is personal and psychological. But where the stern young moralist thinks in terms of the struggle with Fascism and looks upon taking part in the Spanish war rather as the Tchekov sisters look towards Moscow as the answer to all problems, Rawlins, disillusioned, sceptical, already half defeated by life, is weighted by a sense of futility in the face of world trends and seeks only an interlude of individual liberty and self-expression.

Partly by design and partly by accident the schoolmaster embarks on a temporary career as an adventurer. But it is significant that his attitude towards his environment and towards the rich eccentrics on whom he lives is always objective, he never really *becomes* the adventurer, and when Markham persists in crediting him with political and moral integrity he responds inevitably, even if the response is quickly suppressed. It's significant, too, that as soon as Markham's own principles break down under the influence of Rose Palliser, Rawlins is at once impelled to abandon his luxurious parasitic existence and go to the rescue. He cannot bear the degradation of what, fundamentally, are his own ideals.

And so in the end he refuses to take an active part in preventing Markham from going to fight in Spain. He himself is too sophisticated, too disillusioned, to take his own idealism seriously; but still, when he looks at the volunteers at the frontier waiting for the train which will carry them to the war, he feels 'a sad adoration'. 'Their serious faces impressed him with the appalling seriousness of their resolution—to fight, to be killed . . .' One feels here the adult intellectual's regret for the high uncomplicated vision of his youth. One feels that but for the barricade Rawlins surely would be marching with them to battle. He is turning towards the ranks, but the barricade cuts him off, the impassable barricade of the generations.

But if Rawlins does not step out level with Markham, neither does he stand beside the boy's father who 'looked out at freedom and no longer felt anything but apprehension'. Perhaps the schoolmaster does march with the

idealists after all, and not only by proxy, when, at the last, he has his vision of an order that is somewhere imperishable.

One can say that this is a book about an intelligent politically minded boy who wants to fight against Franco; or about an erratic schoolmaster reacting in a shameless outburst of individualism to years of petty repression; or about the excesses of the idle, unprincipled, degenerate, sensual rich; or about time barricades, class barricades, and the rest. It is all these things and quite considerably more: it's a book one can think about.

*The Company She Keeps* sets out to paint the psychological portrait of a young American woman from various angles. As the writer says in her rather pretentious foreword: 'The author and the reader together accompany the heroine back over her life's itinerary', in search of her 'ordinary, indispensable self', revisiting 'not only scenes and persons but points of view.' And, 'If the reader is moved to ask: "Can all this be the same person?"', why, that is the question that both the heroine and the author are up against. For the search is not conclusive: there is no deciding which of these personalities is the "real" one: the home address of the self, like that of the soul, is not to be found in the book.'

From these preliminaries one anticipates a personality study of some interest, since to present an individual's reactions to various life situations, conflicts, stimuli, contacts and so on, is as good a way as any of getting his or her picture. But Mary McCarthy's study of her heroine turns out to be neither as detailed nor as analytical as the foreword leads one to expect. The home address of the heroine's self, indeed, is not to be found in the book.

What one does find is a series of snappy shots superimposed on one another and building up an entertaining, lively, rather bewildering, rather malicious picture of American life and society, somewhat in the style of a photographic montage. The last piece in the book, which glances into the heroine's stream of consciousness while she is lying on the psychoanalyst's couch, is the only one to maintain a serious tone and it is perhaps the least successful.

The writer is at her best when she is being funny, as in her very humorous sketch of the bogus art-dealer; or in *The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt*, which conveys with admirable horror the sordid dreariness of casual erotic adventure.

The psychology of the book is quite superficial, and there's a suggestion of smart slickness about the writing; but judged at *New Yorker* level it's good entertainment value.

Mr. Ruthven Todd in his macabre fantasy has, intentionally or not, produced an ingenious symbolization of the back-to-the-womb complex.

Christopher, the hero of *The Lost Traveller*, is suddenly expelled, as the result of 'an explosion', from his familiar hometown into a strange remote place where everything is menacing, mysterious, frightening and outside his control. In the weird dual-faced gothic-and-concrete city where he is forced to stay, he is offered the prospect of a comfortable existence if he will conform to the prevailing system of harsh, repressive, incomprehensible laws. But Christopher is determined to make his escape and to go back home. He refuses to settle down; he refuses to obey the regulations; he refuses to accept the fact that 'people never leave the city'. He destroys his identity card, bites, kicks, hits out against authority in true neurotic style, getting deeper and deeper into

trouble as his conflict with the governing order intensifies. His final trial and sentencing to the pursuit of an extinct bird—which proves to be identical with his own self—follows the real life pattern of the introvert who retreats into neurosis and suicide rather than adapt himself to the world.

The normal personality component is represented by Omar, the official who turns up at every crisis in Christopher's affairs. To start with Omar is benevolent though stern, always trying to persuade Christopher to behave himself and assuring him that he can become a 'good official' if he will only co-operate, give up his futile rebellion and make the best of the situation. Later on, as Christopher's abnormality grows, Omar dwindles into the irresponsible, degenerate Chancellor who condemns him to what is ultimately his destruction.

*The Lost Traveller* inevitably reminds one of Kafka. There is the Kafka atmosphere of horror, the sense of impending doom and of incalculable, merciless forces at work. Ruthven Todd is a poet and there is beauty in many of the book's descriptive passages. The picture of the cacti stands out with the desert scenes in the early chapters, and also the account towards the end of 'the hunt which came to nothing after all'. But somehow it doesn't quite do the trick. The horror is not quite subtle enough to be truly horrifying. Tragedy is absent. The sinister Kafka genius is not there.

ANNA KAVAN

*The Machiavellians*. By James Burnham. (Putnam. 7s. 6d.)

MR. BURNHAM'S book, *The Managerial Revolution*, has caused some stir among the ideologues. Not, of course, his suggestion that capitalist society is in collapse—that is platitudinous; but his breezy pronouncement that it will be superseded not by a classless society, or a century of the common man, but by a privileged oligarchy of technical and administrative managers. This prospect, and the apparent insouciance with which Mr. Burnham depicts it, has caused pain and embarrassment in the virtuous left, who seem to be whipping each other up into a crusade against the transatlantic heretic. It is true that Mr. Burnham professes to detest it as much as anyone; but his brisk, incisive style lacks the ordinary symptoms of dejection, and anyway, even Cassandra really rather enjoyed her gloomy prophecies. So perhaps it is a good thing that Mr. Burnham has come forward again, with a new book, to show that his heterodox conclusions have been reached by orthodox methods. His new book, *The Machiavellians*, is a treatise on political philosophy; it is an *apparatus criticus* to *The Managerial Revolution*.

Mr. Burnham, whose style has lost nothing of its cock-a-hoop dogmatism, starts off (after a piece of preliminary journalism) with a swinging attack on Dante's *De Monarchia*; and having shown, without difficulty, and with evident relish, that this work is 'intellectually irresponsible', a mere transcendental smoke-screen for Dante's own political aims, which were unsuccessful, discreditable, and reactionary, he turns, with a sigh of relief, to another great Florentine, whom he acknowledges as his master, Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli, says Mr. Burnham, introduced a new method into political philosophy; he made it scientific. He didn't aim at the moon; he didn't use language as a smoke-screen; his arguments are now drawn from Scripture, or moral allegories, or transcendental metaphysics. His aims were limited, but attainable; his

methods pedestrian, but safe. His generalizations are based on evidence, and his evidence drawn from observation and a careful study of history. It is true that his conclusions are discouraging to idealists, but it is very difficult to prove them wrong.

After Machiavelli, Mr. Burnham skips 400 years to four modern political writers whom he claims as disciples of Machiavelli: Gaetano Mosca, Georges Sorel, Robert Michels, and Vilfredo Pareto. All these, he says, are Machiavellians in the sense that their method is scientific, and that their reasoning is not conditioned by any idealism; they merely seek to discover the truth about political behaviour. And having the advantage over Machiavelli of an extra four centuries of history to play with, they have added considerably to his conclusions. Mosca has added the theory that the history of a nation is the history of its ruling class; Sorel has demonstrated the political necessity of myths, the underlying reality of force; Michels has shown that oligarchy is a technical necessity, asserting itself even in the most democratic organizations; Pareto has illustrated the extent to which political behaviour is non-rational, and the constituent elements of a successful *élite*. Mr. Burnham's exposition of all these writers and their theories is admirable, lucid, and concise; and from them he deduces certain general principles which he claims as characteristic of Machiavellianism as a distinctive tradition of political thought. These conclusions are, that an exact science of politics is possible, although (like all pure science) it will be 'neutral with respect to any political goal'; that this science is concerned with the struggle for power, and is based on observation of political behaviour, which is largely irrational, not on an examination of supposedly rational political professions; that all government is the rule of an oligarchy, whose primary object is power and privilege, maintained by force and fraud (including ideologies and religions), but whose interests coincide now more now less with the interests of the governed; and that the continuance of an oligarchy in power is governed by certain laws as to its composition, laws which imply periodic changes and social revolutions.

Now all this (and it is by far the greater part of the book) is admirably done; and returning to the scientific method of the Machiavellians, Mr. Burnham has restored significance to some political conceptions, such as 'liberty' and 'democracy'. But, after all, it isn't general political theories which cause commotion, it's their application. Has Mr. Burnham the same skill in applying these general laws as he shows in deducing and expounding them? Unfortunately his book is so strewn with false logic, provocative error, naïve generalizations, and mere ignorance, that its virtues can easily, and may wilfully, be obscured.

The general principles of Machiavellianism (as Mr. Burnham admits so long as his feet are on the ground) are of very limited application. First, they supply a method of political analysis only, not a political programme; and a study of them can no more make a politician than a study of the critics can make a poet. Most of those who have tried to follow Machiavelli's rules for success have been conspicuous by their failure. Like Mr. Burnham, they were too ambitious. Machiavelli himself failed in his aim; Italy had to wait 300 years for unity, and then owed it less to his scientific analysis than to the 'intellectually irresponsible' verbiage of Mazzini. But this distinction between



analysis and policy is continually obscured by Mr. Burnham, who absurdly consigns politicians like Lenin, Hitler, and Churchill to the same limbo as Dante because their political utterances are not scientific. The same confusion extends to the title of the book, which (under the paper jacket) describes the Machiavellians as 'defenders of liberty'. Now the Machiavellians were never 'defenders of liberty'. They may personally have desired it, but their writings, in Mr. Burnham's own words, are 'neutral with respect of any political goal'. They simply analysed the nature and conditions of liberty, just as they far more obviously analysed the nature and conditions of despotism, in which their practical disciples have been much more interested. Perhaps this subtitle is merely a Machiavellian device to sell the book; but then it should have appeared on the paper jacket.

Secondly, general principles deal with relations of facts, not with facts themselves, and therefore all assertions made on their authority will be conditional on facts which remain outside their control. In other words, only very general prophecies can be made. It is fair (I believe it is safe) to prophesy the emergence of a 'managerial' society; to specify exactly when, and how, and where, and to use these specifications as premisses for still wilder dogmas is, in Mr. Burnham's phrase, intellectually irresponsible. Mr. Burnham damaged his earlier book by many such assertions. He said that Germany had already conquered Europe for good; that Russia was about to fall apart into two halves, under German and Japanese domination; and that parliamentary methods might flicker on in England until 1941, but would then become extinct everywhere. Such absurd errors might have induced humility in some writers; but not in Mr. Burnham, who, aided (as Machiavelli was not) by an extensive ignorance of history, and refreshed, it would seem, by some heady potations, with which he varies the dry fare of Machiavellian logic, uses his conclusions as if they were of universal and particular application.

For instance, he states that changes in the ruling class are always 'very rapid'; and in *The Managerial Revolution* he said that managerial society would be full-blown in a very few years. Now what is the evidence for this conclusion? None is given by Mr. Burnham, or by history. The change from a feudal to a commercial aristocracy, swift in England, was spread over 150 years in France; and feudalism survived in South Italy, Central Europe, and Ireland, for 300 years after its disappearance from England. The trouble about the Marxist dialectic (of which Mr. Burnham still shows traces) is that the processes of history become so inevitable that the details are ignored as unimportant; and the details include the evidence against the theory. The fact that a great war is still undecided doesn't disconcert the prophetic omniscience of Mr. Burnham, who decided it long ago, and plainly regards war as simply a process for hastening the inevitable. But war can retard as well as hasten. In the early sixteenth century, South Germany and North Italy led the world in industrial resources and technique; and Mr. Burnham, had he lived in the days of Machiavelli, would probably have pronounced their coming political ascendancy. In fact, a succession of wars ruined their economy, scattered their technicians, and postponed their political development for 300 years. How disastrous Mr. Burnham's irresponsible generalizations could be in practice is clear if we apply them to this country. Knowing as he did, scientifically,

that Germany would conquer England, Europe and Western Russia, Mr. Burnham, in 1937-39, would presumably have agreed with that other 'realist' Mr. Chamberlain, and would have chosen to avoid defeat in war by a peaceful resignation to inevitable eclipse. Whether such Machiavellianism would have been the best defence of liberty is questionable.

Mr. Burnham's combination of an omniscient style and an enormous ignorance is not confined to history; it extends to political science. Exulting in his discomfiture of Dante, he uses language which is only comprehensible on the assumption that he is confusing him with Petrarch. After Machiavelli, he postulates a dark age in political science until the present century, when the decay of capitalism has produced a similar clarity of vision and a new crop of Machiavellis. Can it be that Mr. Burnham has never read Hobbes or Montesquieu or de Tocqueville; that in his preoccupation with the metaphysical theorists of the Continent, he is unaware of the whole tradition of English political thought? He produces as a revelation from Mosca the theory of liberty that was a commonplace in eighteenth-century England, and seems to suppose that because the fog of metaphysics extends back beyond his personal knowledge, it extends back for ever. Mr. Burnham's incisive style is refreshing when he makes a good point; used to drive home his ignorance, it makes him ridiculous.

Now these are serious faults: they greatly reduce the importance of the book; but since they are faults of application, of explanation, and of taste, they are largely irrelevant. Mr. Burnham's main thesis rests upon that part of his book which is least original, and, I think, rests firmly. He has expounded his sources; he has re-defined (though with unnecessary triumph) some important conceptions; and the general principles which he deduces support, in general, the thesis of the managerial revolution. Since the form of society depends on the means and technique of production, and the independent survival of societies on the appropriateness of this relation; and since the capitalist form of society is unable to ensure survival; it follows that the capitalist structure must be replaced (in nations that mean to survive) by another more appropriate to modern production. And since, in every society, a privileged oligarchy will always emerge; and since this oligarchy consists of those who understand, and can control, the techniques of production and administration; it follows that the coming society will be ruled by an oligarchy of the indispensable, but still submerged, 'managers'. And since the welfare of the governed is involved, first, in the efficiency of the ruling class, and secondly, in the existence of practical liberty (which is also indispensable to a high civilization and therefore independently desirable); and since the conditions of both these requirements are ascertainable; then it is the duty of political theorists not to recommend an ideal liberty, which only leads to a unitary state incompatible with practical liberty, but to demonstrate and encourage these conditions, viz.: fluidity and adaptability in the structure of the ruling class, which secures its efficiency; and the existence of those unresolved conflicts among it which lead to liberty. Unfortunately, having established this formula, Mr. Burnham applies it too ambitiously, without adequate regard to its inherent limitations. That doesn't invalidate the formula; it merely discredits Mr. Burnham's judgement.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER



# JOHN COWPER POWYS THE ART OF GROWING OLD

By the author of *Mortal Strife*, *A Philosophy of Solitude*,  
*Wolf Solent* and *The Meaning of Culture*

In this book Mr. Powys concentrates the full force of everything in him upon the problem—which is now peculiarly his own, as he has just turned seventy—of 'how to be happy though old'. Mr. Powys has always maintained that he has something of the woman in him; and in this book he deals as much with the old age of different types of women as with that of different types of men.

Mr. Powys discusses here the peculiar cruelties suffered by and also inflicted by old people in connection with their children, especially in connection with their daughters; and he enumerates all the little tricks and devices and methods by means of which an old person's relations with the young can be improved. Another aspect of Old Age dealt with in detail is its attitude to Nature and its attitude to books and reading; while the peculiar temptations of elderly people in connection with greed about food and with miserliness over money and with susceptibility to the erotic attractions of the young are discussed with a good deal of freedom and boldness.

Nor is the War forgotten; for the extremely crucial psychological questions with regard to the war-record of the old and the young are gone into without prejudice or partiality, the author claiming to have a young spirit in an old body.

10s. 6d. net

JONATHAN CAPE



K. J. SHAPIRO

## PERSON, PLACE & THING

A volume of poems by a brilliant young American poet

*February. 6s. net*

J. BRONOWSKI

## A MAN WITHOUT A MASK

Study of William Blake, not as an isolated literary and artistic figure of genius, but as a revolutionary able to penetrate imaginatively into the disorders of his age

With 5 illustrations. *March. About 8s. 6d. net*

## '42 TO '44

A contemporary memoir upon human behaviour  
during the crisis of the world revolution

By H. G. WELLS

*Edition strictly limited to 2,000 copies at 42s. net*

*No cheaper edition will appear for at least 5 years*

This remarkable book is, in many ways, a continuation of Wells' *Experiment in Autobiography*. It shows how one of the most active minds of the day is reacting to the developments of the world crisis. It includes the thesis accepted by the University of London for the Doctorate of Science

*Early March*

SECKER AND WarBURG